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TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE RESULTS

Sustainable Tourism: International Cooperation for Development
ONLINE TOOL KIT AND RESOURCE SERIES

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Preface

People travel for a variety of reasons: to escape, explore, understand, and participate. But at the core of the experience lies the destination — the place that hands something to the traveler to keep forever and share with others. This toolkit helps destinations put in place strategies and programs that will best tell their unique story and become an inviting host for visitors no matter the purpose of their journey.

Destination management organizations (DMO) are often the only advocates for a holistic tourism industry in a place; and in this role they ensure the mitigation of tourism's negative impacts to the environment and local communities as well as the sharing of opportunities for a vibrant exchange of people. In fact, a DMO may best serve to facilitate dialogue among the private sector, public sector, and other stakeholders that may otherwise never collaborate or understand how their decisions reverberate down a destination's long tourism value chain.

Because of this unique capability, DMOs prove invaluable for supporting tourism development, especially in developing destinations where tourism is an important economic driver and mechanism for equitable social capacity building.

Developing a DMO iteratively relies on identifying and redefining a destination vision through collaboration. The pages that follow outline how to build a successful DMO to increase visitation while preserving a destination's assets. Every destination is different, however, so no one volume could ever be a complete resource. The information within hopefully guides the reader to explore more deeply additional interests and seek out examples of innovation by other organizations around the world.

The processes, examples, and tools have been adapted from several years of expertise in the field by tourism professionals. We would like to thank those individuals who — without their diligent work and insight — this toolkit would not be possible: James Dion, Shawndra Herry, Matt Humke, Simon Jones, Eric Lin, Juan Luna Kelser, Hamilton McNutt, Jennifer Park, Chris Seek, Natalie Sellier, Ashley Silver, and Jonathan Tourtellot.

Drs. Don Hawkins and Kristin Lamoureux of The George Washington University are responsible for the education of hundreds of successful individuals — both in the classroom and out. We are both sincerely thankful to be their students and look forward for every new chance to learn from them.

We'd also like to thank Roberta Hilbruner, whose unparalleled championing of sustainable tourism has improved numerous destinations and people throughout the world.

Photo from http://thetravelword.com/2010/02/13/

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We also express our appreciation to the World Tourism Organization and its Themis Foundation for permission to utilize information from their publications and to pilot test this publication.

And finally, we would like to remember the contributions of Chrystel Cancel, whose life the Haiti Earthquake of 2010 suddenly took from us while pursuing her passion of sustainable tourism development. Her talent in engaging and emboldening local people to preserve their place can be seen throughout our many references to the Bocas Sustainable Tourism Alliance in Panama, which she led from its inception.

The target audience for this manual includes professionals working on tourism-related projects in developing countries, including staff from donor and government agencies, NGOs, consulting firms, universities, businesses, and related entities.

We hope this publication is a useful resource for the reader — no matter the purpose of the journey.

With enthusiasm and gratitude,

David C. Brown & Jennifer Stange

A Few Confusing Terms

There are a few terms and concepts that often haunt the tourism literature. Here we present several to avoid confusion. Their definitions and support material come from the World Heritage Center (2007).

Destination and Sites

The market ultimately decides the boundaries of a *destination*, influenced by marketing, as well as physical and cultural limits. Thus the market may perceive an entire country as a destination (as marketed by a tourism ministry) or a single national park, such as Iguazu National Park in Argentina. The term *site* overlaps significantly with destination but tends to center on a particular place bound by physical or cultural characteristics. Many sites often inhabit a single destination such as the principal temples of Tikal National Park, or multiple historical buildings in the Historic Center of Vienna.

Attractions

An *attraction* is any object, person, place, or concept that draws people either geographically or through remote electronic means so that they might have an experience. The experience can be recreational, spiritual, or otherwise. An attraction is an outstanding example (for whatever criteria used) of a resource which includes all the elements in a particular class. For example the Monarch Butterfly is an attraction among the 1,000s of Lepidoptera species, the resource class of butterflies and moths, in Mexico. Thousands and thousands of Mayan burial sites exist in Guatemala, yet only very few actually earn the distinction of being an attraction.

Ultimately the market — not tourism experts or magazines — decide what is an attraction among its much wider resource class. If people spend time and money to experience a particular resource, then that resource is also an attraction.

Traditionally, people divide up attractions between cultural and natural. Cultural should, but does not always, include historical attractions as well. Public Use Planning effort of the World Heritage Center uses another categorization, perhaps more refined, consisting of four categories:

Geophysical-landscape-aesthetic. Includes mountains, gorges, big rocks, rock formations, caves, rivers, water bodies, scenic views, overlooks of forests (when the attraction is merely seeing and not interacting more directly with the forest), unusual cloud formations, unusual meteorological

conditions (high velocity or unusual wind behavior, light hitting or passing through geological formations in strange ways), thermal waters, volcanic activity, or even unusual celestial events such as the Northern Lights, Perseid Meteor Showers, or exceptionally clear night views for star-gazing.

Ecological-biological. Includes any and all organisms, their parts, their behaviors, aggregations, or associations in communities with other organisms. It also includes ecological events or processes that include the participation of organisms, such as decomposition, reproduction, predation, migration, and fossil remains (though one could categorize these as geophysical as well).

Cultural-historical. Includes all human constructions, practices, and remains (archaeological). It includes all manifestations of human evolution and cultural expression. In some cases, it includes ideas of particular individuals or events that are interpreted through objects and places like a house or a person's possession, like some famous philosopher's eyeglasses or the house of a military commander.

Recreational. These include all attractions built by humans for the specific purpose of entertainment or education. This includes theme parks, botanical gardens, sports fields, motion-based attractions (such as roller coasters), zoos, museums, theatres, shopping malls, etc. In the context of protected areas, this resource category is normally not considered, since the purpose of protecting sites is to preserve and exhibit natural and cultural attractions, not artificial human-based attractions like Disney World. This is not to speak badly of this type of attraction, but since such attractions are normally incompatible with and compete with protected sites, they sometimes can be left out of protected area attraction inventories. If they do exist in a site, they can be classified as existing services, designed to support the experience of the protected resources.

Attractions are often confused with activities and services. See "product" below. Attractions can also manifest at a variety of scales, again, depending completely on market perception. For example, a local attraction may only draw people from a local village such as a mundane fountain in which the mayor's daughter cried after having twin babies. A regional attraction has power to attraction domestic tourists from throughout a region such as the Basilica and the Virgen de los Ángeles in Costa Rica to which once a year tens of thousands of Costa Ricans walk to offer thanks and ask favors; most of those who walk live nearby. Likewise attractions can draw visitors nationally and internationally.

Attractions can also be nested, one inside another. Durmitor National Park in Montenegro is an attraction in and of itself, but also enjoys the blessings of two major site attractions whose patrons might care less about the rest of the park. Black Lake draws large numbers of Montenegrins who would never venture much beyond the picnic tables and the Tara River brings in rafters and kayakers the world over. Each of these then appeals to a different market segment and would be marketed separately as well as together.

Tourism Products

Despite products' being the central feature of the industry, much confusion washes over the concept. Products like attractions are often confused with the activity and with services, but a product is more than these. A useful definition comes from the Honduran Institute of Tourism, slightly modified by the Public Use Planning effort. Though each industry defines product components according to its own realities, tourism can be thought of as six components aligned in logical sequence.

Attraction. All tourism products begin with an attraction, without which no further discussion is needed.

Access. An attraction must have access or else no further discussion is needed. Do note, however, that most often access refers to visitor capacity to arrive. Sometimes access means the opposite. Sometimes an attraction is attractive because it is difficult to get to, such as wilderness areas and for adventure activities. Either way, access is essential to the exploitation of the attraction.

Activity. Every visitor experiences an attraction, but how they experience depends on the activity they select (see "Experience" below). A person can experience Mount Everest vicariously through the Internet or from the porch of a cushy mountain lodge. They could also experience it by scaling the mountain to its death-defying icy peak. Thus it is erroneous to say that Mount Everest offers a particular kind of experience; it may be short-hand for mountaineering, but experience depends on the activity.

Services. To realize an activity requires services. Services are all those functions that a visitor might or might not be able to do for him or herself but in all cases chooses someone else to do it for them. Services include actually allowing the activity to take place (such as access granted by a national park), the security of park guards and wilderness responders, the food, the housing, the transportation, the communication, the provision of souvenirs, etc. If an activity requires no services (such as using the backyard of one's own home), then we are not talking about a tourism product.

Qualified personnel. Service provision, in turn, requires that someone qualified provide that service, whether a guide, chef, driver, transportation company, national park staff, police, or street juggler. Even if that someone is an automated robot, it still requires someone (and someone also to service the robot, of course).

Promotion. Despite the best of tourism product designs, if no one knows the product exists, then all is for naught. A tourism product must also include promotions, even if that is "only" word-of-mouth.

EXPERIENCE

Some people might include the experience as one of the tourist components, but no product can provide an experience, only an opportunity to have an experience. Mount Everest cannot provide an experience, no matter what kind. The tour operator does not provide an experience. Only the visitor can create the experience based on certain factors. While there are many ways to define an experience, Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggest the following equation, redrawn by Public Use Planning.

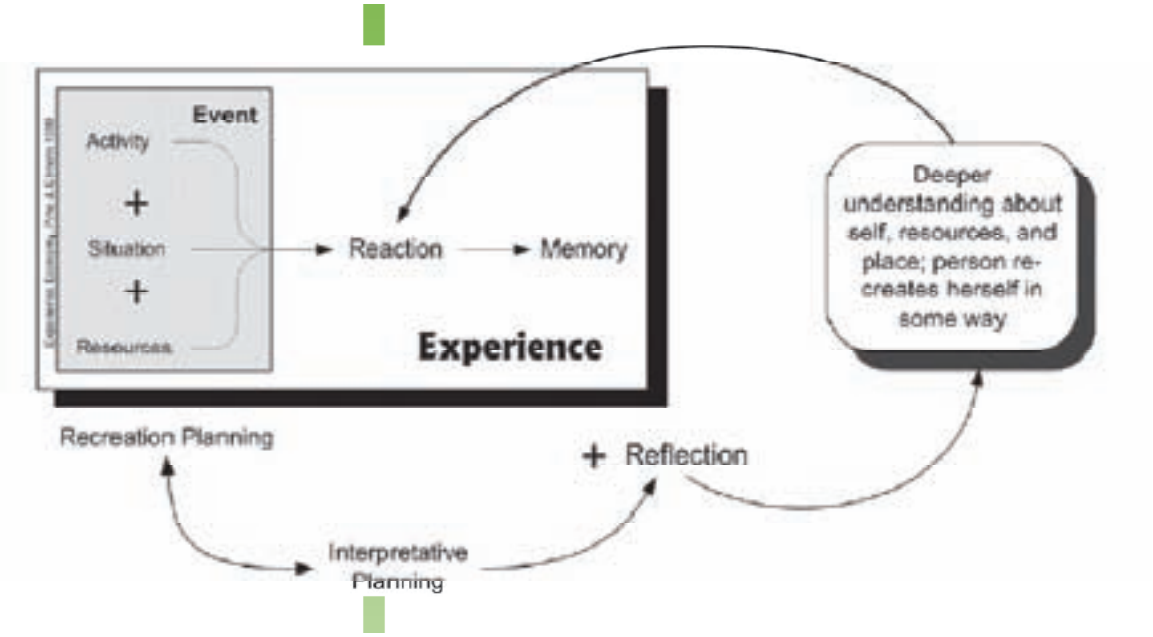


Figure 1.1. Anatomy of an Experience. (Adapted from Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

In Figure 1.1, an experience begins as an event where a visitor experiences (activity) an attraction (resources) within a particular context or situation (high-quality rock climbing equipment with top-rated guides or with tattered ropes and a retired green beret). This event generates a reaction ("I liked it!" "I hated it!" "I'm really pretty good at rock climbing after all!") and that reaction burns a memory upon which the visitor reflects and creates new meaning. Ultimately the person, through this meaning-making process, both increases his or her understanding of the world and of the self as well. As the visitors' confidence increases or decreases, as self-image transforms, in effect, they literally re-create themselves, which of course is where the word "recreation" comes from anyway. As the figure further points out, interpretive planning and recreation planning influence greatly the event or the opportunity to have an experience.

Unit 1: Ensuring a Sustainable Form of Development

This unit was adapted with permission from an article by Jonathan Tourtellot (2010). All material not otherwise cited derives from this source.

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between traditional and sustainable tourism
- Understand basic principles of sustainable tourism development
- Identify tools to manage destinations more sustainably
- Grasp the state of the art of this still-developing field — lessons learned, challenges, and the importance of key players

Traditional Tourism vs. Sustainable Tourism

You know the scene: it is high season and today the famous historic site is drawing hundreds maybe even thousands of visitors. Tourists trail guides with colorful umbrellas held high. You hear routine explanations about kings, battles, artists, and architecture delivered in English, Japanese, French, Italian, and Arabic.

A minister of tourism might look at the scene and smile, "Business is good." Preservationists might look at the scene and fret, "Can the site withstand all this traffic?" Many residents simply avoid the area, while other more entrepreneurial types rush in with their wares and scams to prey on the crowds. And many affluent and educated visitors take one look at this scene and hasten elsewhere, "Too touristy!"

How to handle all this? In 1960, when affordable jetliners helped to launch the modern-day tourism explosion, the world experienced fewer than 70 million international arrivals a year. Since then, humankind has grown — a lot. We are more numerous and more affluent, and we want to see new places. Tourism's growth confronts destinations with both opportunity and stress. Now international arrivals approach one billion, a fourteen-fold increase in tourism traffic — and that is only a fraction of domestic tourism, which has soared recently in countries with fast-growing middle classes such as China, Mexico, India, and Brazil.

In popular destinations, this increasing visitation offers both challenges and opportunities. Destinations that hope to become popular face a choice: traditional tourism or a more sustainable approach.

For the traditional tourism model, short-term reward often outranks long-term planning. Low-margin quantity can eclipse high-benefit quality; success is measured in sheer number of arrivals, not benefit per tourist. Without careful planning and management, the negatives outnumber positives. The issues transcend just overcrowding. Reckless development harms the environment, degrades scenery, disrupts local culture, and channels tourism revenues away from local communities. Delicate historic, archaeological, and natural sites suffer physical wear and tear. Oil residue from hands and fingers slowly erodes aging limestone blocks and gypsum walls. On coral reefs clumsy divers bump into living polyps, crush them with flippers, or bury them under kicked-up sand. In caves, even carbon dioxide from too many human exhalations can chemically alter both rock formations and prehistoric paintings. Entire landscapes fall victim to resort and vacation home sprawl, and developers force out native residents.

Figure 1.1. Traditional Tourism. High-volume, low-margin beach tourism on the Costa Brava, Spain has overwhelmed endemic Catalan character. (Photo: Jonathan Tourtellot)

Yet simply adding more planners and managers does not necessarily work. Destination leaders and stakeholders need to embrace principles and techniques to make tourism sustainable.

Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line

So what is sustainable tourism? The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (www.unwto.org) has defined sustainable tourism as an enterprise that achieves a balance between the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development so as to guarantee long-term benefits to recipient communities. According to UNWTO, it should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecosystems and helping conserve biodiversity
- Respect socio-cultural authenticity, conserve built and living cultural heritage, and contribute to cross-cultural understanding and tolerance
- Ensure long-term socio-economic benefits, fairly distributed to all community stakeholders, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities, social services, and poverty alleviation

This is commonly called the *triple bottom line* for sustainable development: environmental, economic, and cultural returns on investment. Some identify a fourth benefit of well-managed tourism: public education for both visitors and residents to deepen understanding of cultures and ecosystems, though this is also a cultural benefit.

A lot depends on the situation in which a destination finds itself. How wealthy or poor is the region? How well do locals understand and support the characteristics that make their place attractive to tourists? How vulnerable are those assets? Which type of potential tourist is most appropriate? How many tourists come, what do they do, and who gets their money?

When an attraction such as a popular national park or renowned cultural monument is involved, impacts depend a lot on tourist interaction with neighboring towns, called *gateway communities*. So good management means thinking about the destination as a whole — not just the protected site, but also its human, natural, and cultural settings.

From 2004 through 2010, *National Geographic Traveler* (http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2009/11/destinations-rated/intro-text) has published global "destination stewardship" surveys of expert opinion about the sustainability and quality of whole places. To capture the entire tourism experience and its impact, expert panelists consider six criteria — environment, cultural integrity, built heritage, aesthetics, tourism management, and overall trend — and submit a combined score for each destination.

Responses have shown remarkable consistency over the years. Top-scoring places often escape heavy tourism traffic, such as Norway's Western Fjords (an excellent 87 out of 100), Portugal's Douro Valley (76), and Palawan in the Philippines (72). But some very popular places, such as Alhambra/Granada (81) in Spain, still rate well. More often, though, tourist overcrowding, misuse, and crass commercialization along the periphery of the site can lower a score, as it does in Angkor in Cambodia (48) or in the Great Smoky Mountains (49) in the U.S.

A Double-edged Sword

At best, tourism creates an economic incentive to protect destination assets — characteristics that attract tourists in the first place. In Tasmania, for instance, tourism businesses that work in the Tasmanian Wilderness rainforest helped to cancel a proposed logging road.

But when greed overpowers conservation, tourism becomes destructive, consuming sites upon which it depends, as has occurred wherever legions of bus-borne visitors swarm over delicate, ancient monuments, day in and day out. Angkor Wat, Cambodia, has suffered such overload.

Lesser known sites have the opposite problem: Where is everybody? Wise tourism, conservation, and poverty alleviation need to work together. Without tourism's economic benefit there may not be enough funds to protect historic buildings and neighborhoods from developers' bulldozers, or wildlife parks from poachers' guns and loggers' axes.

For 11 years, Art Pedersen served as UNESCO's point person on tourism at World Heritage sites (http://whc.unesco.org). He notes how countries may vigorously promote the attributes of a site proposed for World Heritage, seeking the prestige of inscription and the tourism windfall it might bring. "But is there a management plan in place for all those visitors?" he asks. "They don't do that." He argues that a site needs a variety of tools to achieve a good relationship between tourism, an attractive site, and the neighboring communities.

Let's take a look at a few.

Tools to Help Manage Destinations more Sustainably

First, it makes sense to take stock of the situation.

System of Measuring Excellence for Destinations (SMED). Typically, a destination hires the Montreal-based Centre of Excellence for Destinations (www.ced.travel), a UNWTO affiliate, to perform two months of research on the entire tourism and stewardship situation in the locality, including a series of workshops, interviews, and meetings.

The SMED process is fairly new, but some places have already used it. Mexico City has begun using SMED recommendations. In the congested old downtown area, for instance, "a new bicycle rental system has given great results both for tourists and locals," reports SMED expert Dr. César Castaneda. "People working in the *centro histórico* are encouraged to go out for lunch and meetings on the bikes instead of driving."

Portugal's Douro Valley, famed for its terraced hillsides of port wine vineyards, used its SMED report to obtain 30 million euros from the European Union to implement the recommendations, including creation of a DMO, official adoption of National Geographic's Geotourism Charter principles, and development of a network of tourism information booths.

BOX 1.1

THE GEOTOURISM CHARTER AND APPLICATION

The Geotourism Charter developed by National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations cites 13 principles which steer sustainable destinations "to sustain or enhance the geographical character of a place — its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents." The application (www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Charter_Application_blank.pdf) form to be approved as a Geotourism Charter destination constitutes a useful tool for any destination seeking to map out an economically beneficial tourism program focused on unique assets. See the application filled out by Portugal's Douro Valley at www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Charter_Application_Douro_example.pdf.

Scientific research. Ecosystems are under pressure almost everywhere. Protecting them requires understanding how they work. At Australia's Great Barrier Reef, for instance, marine ecology findings led to the politically difficult but scientifically defendable decision to increase "no take" fishing zones from 14% to 33%. Elsewhere, National Geographic and others have been funding similar research that has led to such actions as bans on fishing the Nassau grouper spawning aggregations on the Belize Barrier Reef.

Monitoring. In China, Yangshuo's karst landscape and constituent towns are a major Chinese tourist attraction. To understand sustainability issues, UNWTO has worked with Sun Yatsen University to monitor some 40 sustainability indicators developed by UNWTO. This "Tourism Observatory" conducts annual surveys of four key groups: businesses, residents, foreign tourists, and domestic tourists, and then assesses indicator data. Thus, the exercise includes input from people

often left out of tourism management: visitors and residents. The reports help local leaders identify and resolve problems.

Managing the Tourist Torrent

The next step is to use available information to create a public use plan (PUP) for the site. A PUP proposes how best to manage visitation — volume of traffic, fees, protection of sensitive areas, interpretation (process of provoking deeper appreciations of the site), and so on. Many destinations have no plans. Yet ballooning tourism increasingly makes mandatory their creation and implementation.

China. David Sheppard spent ten years heading up the protected areas program of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (www.iucn.org). He witnessed the tourism explosion firsthand. The woods, waterfalls, and jagged karst formations of China's Jiuzhaigou Valley, Sheppard reports, is the site of just such an explosion. "The valley had maybe 10,000 tourists a year in the early 1990s. Now it is millions per year."

He is impressed with the Chinese management response at Jiuzhaigou. "They worked out how to accommodate high volumes by having a computer monitor different bus routes through the park. If one area was in danger of congestion, the computer would direct the next bus to a different route."

Belize. The World Heritage Barrier Reef's Half Moon Caye and Blue Hole National Monuments attract divers and snorkelers. To protect the marine resources, the PUP for the two sites uses indicators as coral cover and conch abundance as part of its *Limits of Acceptable Change* management approach. That in turn provides guidance on tourist management. PUP workshops engaged tourism service providers throughout the process to ensure a cooperative approach and to help develop new tourism products in a sustainable way, so that diving boats, for instance, go to ecologically robust sites rather than fragile ones.

Spain. The Alhambra's notably high stewardship score in the face of heavy visitation is due in part to the palace's healthy relationship with its host city, Granada. Tourism consultant Georges Zouain worked on some policies that have made a difference. The Moorish palace had been suffering from day trippers coming by busloads from coastal resorts. Granada residents received no benefits, and visitors had an inferior, overcrowded quick dip experience into the site. Redirecting buses and providing city-to-site shuttles discouraged superficial visitation. The new arrangement encourages tourists to tarry in the city while waiting for their reserved Alhambra hour to come round. "Visitors are spending more in the city," says Zouain.

"To visit properly you would come independently, not on a tour bus. You would book a room for two or three days, preferably in a boutique hotel in an old Arab house." In Zouain's ideal visit, you

would spend time with the people. "It's a friendly population. Have tapas and wine in the evening. Listen to the city's good music."

This is the kind of approach needed for most destinations: an integrated tourism experience — socially, economically, environmentally. The triple bottom line.

Engaging Gateway Communities

Granada is a gateway community for the Alhambra, and the management changes were successful largely because local government and businesses participated in the process. Zouain argues, "Managing the heritage site separately from the community destroys the place more than it helps."

National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations (http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/index.html) introduced another technique for engaging communities: creation of a local "geotourism stewardship council" using participatory mapping as a catalyst. The geotourism concept emphasizes destination qualities, its definition being "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place — its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents." For stakeholders, the focus on presenting "our place" can rally support and encourage cooperation conducive to sustainability.

Geotourism mapping uses regional character to bring together — often for the first time — representatives from every endemic facet of the destination. Nature, history, culture, agriculture and cuisine, landscapes and geology, hotels and restaurants all are represented at the same table, along with tour operators, government agencies, retail suppliers, and civic organizations. All initially oversee the mapping project. Many of these councils now seek to become permanent.

BOX 1.2

Geotourism Stewardship Councils

Geotourism stewardship councils (www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/NG_Geotourism_Stewardship_Council.pdf) bring together people with interests in all endemic assets of a place. It is a public-private partnership with members from government, business, and civil society. Councils may begin as ad hoc committees and may eventually evolve into permanent institutions. A council's integrated composition and independent status allows it to survive changes in government and provide continuity to tourism policy.

As the Center's head of field operations, James Dion has helped numerous councils invite resident participation. The process adds value to geotourism assets. Whether reporting from Peru's Cuzco/Machu Picchu circuit, or from California's Yosemite region, Dion often calls these meetings "inspiring." They build pride. "There's a thrill in watching people rediscover what their towns and country sides have to offer," he says.

Figure 1.2. Catalytic Project. T-shirted student team helped residents in Peru make nominations for a geotourism map. (Photo: James Dion, Solimar)

Steve Thompson witnessed this in his own home, where he led a successful geotourism project. The region, branded the "Crown of the Continent," centers on the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, on the U.S.-Canada border. Thompson led the formation of the Crown of the Continent Council (www.crownofthecontinent.net). He emphasizes the importance of this forum in an area divided by international and provincial borders. "In our case," he says, "the council enabled diverse stakeholders to come together and develop a community, to create a sense of regional identity that previously didn't exist."

Heritage tourism expert Cheryl Hargrove has worked for years in the Great Smokies region, a classic case of gateway decline and — possibly — renewal. The Great Smoky Mountains experienced a traditional tourism boom even before jetliners came along. "What didn't work," she says, "was the

assumption in the 1950s that gateways could be all things and everything." The result was Gatlinburg, Tennessee, a cheesy, amusement-driven center on the edge of a national park. For decades, it pulled in an unsophisticated tourism market whose nature appreciation roared through the forest on dirt bikes. Citizens and businesses of the Gatlinburg Gateway Foundation now work to clean up the town's image. According to Hargrove, "They're saying 'we want our place to reflect the characteristics of the park experience.' "

Building Capacity

In impoverished and underdeveloped areas, though, sufficient local businesses may not exist. Such regions need to build capacity, to develop enough financial and human resources to address problems and responsibly seize opportunities.

Dr. Donald Hawkins of The George Washington University in Washington, DC, has been involved with efforts to improve the situation around Petra, Jordan, a popular but challenged destination that rated 60 — the "so-so" range — on the National Geographic stewardship survey in 2006 (http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2006/11/destinations-rated/intro-text). Survey panelists then characterized Petra as a mix of awe-inspiring archaeology and a gateway that is a sprawling mess of touts and tackiness.

Now Hawkins sees hope for Petra in a strengthened regional commission that embraces not only the archaeological site but also municipalities and local Bedouin tribes. One problem, says Hawkins, is that too many day trippers do not stay long enough to help the local economy. International aid programs help small businesses to address that. To spice up the gateway's relatively dead evenings, for instance, he cites a grant that helped the Petra Kitchen restaurant set up an evening workshop in Bedouin cuisine, with tourists cooking and then eating their newly created meals.

"If you don't grow the economy around the World Heritage sites," sums up Hawkins, "you can't substantively address the conservation agenda for them or the needs of the local communities for jobs and education."

Is All This Working?

Not well enough, not yet. In many parts of the world, plans are not put into effect. Pedersen complains about the "futility of management plans that don't get implemented. We all spend millions of dollars on this stuff. Yet no capacity is being built." James Dion says planners often put the cart before the horse. In many communities, he argues, "The people don't need a plan, they need a

vision. They don't need training, they need empowerment." Only then can plans and training succeed.

With increasingly popular places, the challenge is when to stop. Where is the balance point? The Petra authority is modeled on a similar authority in Aqaba, Jordan's economically successful but environmentally questionable resort zone on the Red Sea. While some Jordanian leaders want to keep development near Petra on a size and style appropriate for a great heritage site, other interests reportedly think theme parks there would be a fine idea. For example, the King of Jordan just announced the creation of a $1.5 billion Star Trek theme park in Aqaba (Singh, 2011).

Shades of Gatlinburg! It is a common pattern. The same mistakes made half a century ago in the Smokies now repeat in many other parts of the world that see a World Heritage inscription as a green light to erect a casino next door.

Wholesale dependence on the traditional-tourism model can even result in capacity loss. After World War II, in the Northern Mariana Islands — then part of a UN Trust Territory — indigenous Chamorro guides gave heritage tours of key war locales on Saipan and Tinian in fluent Japanese. Decades later, Saipan shifted to traditional sun-and-sand mass tourism, still focused on Japan but relying heavily on Filipino labor and a standard resort business model. As older Chamorro guides died or retired, young Chamorros did not take their place. Now sun-and-sand hotels are struggling, yet Saipan has little capacity to resurrect heritage tourism, lacking home-grown guides fluent in the language of their biggest tourism market.

Figure 1.3. Unsustainable Tourism. Failed tourist shopping mall, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. (Photo: Jonathan Tourtellot)

What about the Tourists?

Tourists are a barely tapped resource. Alert, mindful tourists can help, if properly involved.

Traveler's philanthropy is one way. Direct donations support a heritage site. Brian Mullis of Sustainable Travel International (www.sustainabletravelinternational.org) provides an example from the Dogon country of Mali. Tour operators offer clients visiting the Cliff of Bandiagara an opportunity to contribute to local nonprofit organizations, such as the Joliba Trust (www.jolibatrust.org.uk). Joliba helps communities with agriculture, well-digging, and small business development.

Travel businesses can also team up with grant-giving organizations like US-based Tourism Cares (www.tourismcares.org/save-our-sites), which gives small grants to support heritage sites worldwide, this includes publishing much-needed visitor guidelines at Angkor Wat.

Lindblad Expeditions (www.expeditions.com) takes a different tack. For many years, the expedition cruise line persuaded clients on its Galápagos cruises to donate two millions US dollars toward local conservation projects. They use immersive, highly interpretive wildlife expeditions over several days to excite visitors before the company actually invites them to contribute to the Galapagos Conservation Fund

Voluntourism is another route. The Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Miami, for instance, runs a volunteer day trip into Florida's ecologically troubled Everglades. Volunteers help with tree planting, pest plant removal, and recycling. The help such programs provide varies widely, from a few hours to many months.

Washington's CDC Development Solutions (www.cdcdevelopmentsolutions.org), senior director, Michael Levett, aims to recruit hands-on practitioners delivering real world expertise. A domestic tourism development initiative for Nigeria's heritage-rich Cross River state, for instance, relied on a volunteer mix of seasoned IBM experts, tourism professionals, and MBA graduate practitioners, working on site for as long as a year. Says Levett, "They helped lay the foundation for Cross River to become a lush, fun-filled, world-class escape for Nigerians."

What We've Learned, Where We're Going

Better management, building capacity, not going overboard all contribute to making tourism more sustainable. Work to date suggests some basic lessons.

Communication counts. Residents need to understand why the historic site or natural landscape they see every day represents a potentially important economic benefit for them. Managers need to understand locals' needs and concerns. Tourists need to learn the significance of what they see, why and how they can help conserve it. It is best when locals help with this interpretation, as the process increases their ownership of the story. And finally, the rest of the world needs to understand the value of the place. No better messengers exist than those enthusiastic home comers with travel stories to tell.

Planning counts. Without planning and public education, the incentive to protect can easily degenerate into mere exploitation. There is a need to see the whole. Says Pedersen: "You have to look beyond the site borders for ideas like payback schemes," whereby local businesses support site conservation.

Management counts. Just letting tourism happen likely leads to trouble, especially when visitation soars. Dispersing tourists and timing their access can mitigate crowding. Encouraging tourists to stay

overnight instead of making quick day trips can increase local economic benefits. High-quality tourism rather than high-volume tourism conserves rather than exploits.

Individuals count. Behind institutional reports and government memos hides a key reality: individuals make huge differences. Success or failure easily depends on a dedicated local person working tirelessly to inspire others, organize them, and keep the process moving. Dion sees this over and over. "Good managers working with a bad tool are better than bad managers with a good one." Sheppard confirms, "a champion is important in virtually every case." Yet procedures to identify and mentor this most essential ingredient are almost always absent.

Communities count. People who live in gateways hold the key to create a "virtuous circle," whereby tourism's contribution to the economy generates incentives to conserve the resources that keep tourists coming. Pedersen thinks it necessary to have some kind of forum, such as geotourism stewardship councils. Top-down schemes imposed from the outside don't work well, if at all. Locals must own part of the process. At the Great Barrier Reef, community meetings on no take zones kept policy disagreements from solidifying into polarization. The process included opportunities for fishing interests to state their positions, no matter how hostile. Results slowly won converts as reserves increased fishing productivity beyond their borders.

It is clear that industry practitioners are only beginning to understand how best to harness the power of tourism, how to use it for better, and not worse. Art Pedersen sums it up this way: "There are no success stories. It's a process. The more arrows in the quiver, the better." He pauses. "Nobody's carrying a full quiver."

SUMMARY

A simple policy recipe for ensuring a sustainable form of tourism development can be followed by remembering six steps:

- Promote sustainable development
- Create products for specific visitor market segments
- Gain and maintain competitiveness
- Enhance visitor experience
- Preserve local resources
- Improve residents' quality of life

By keeping these steps in mind, a destination is on the right track to a better future of sustainable tourism that will last through many future generations. Either establishing a destination certification program or enrolling in an existing program will help ensure the planning and implementation stays on the correct path of sustainability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- CDC Development Solutions
  www.cdcdevelopmentsolutions.org

- Center of Excellence for Destinations
  www.ced.travel

- International Union for Conservation of Nature
  www.iucn.org

- Joliba Trust
  www.jolibatrust.org.uk

- Lindblad Expeditions
  www.expeditions.com

- National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations
  http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/

- National Geographic Traveler
  http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/traveler-magazine/
- Tourism Cares

www.tourismcares.org

- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
  www.unesco.org

- United Nations World Tourism Organization
  www.unwto.org

Unit 2: Tourism Inventory, Vision, and Goal Setting

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Complete a tourism inventory of a destination's tourism supply including but not limited to accommodations, tour operators, attractions, and relevant logistics
- Develop a vision for the destination
- Articulate long-term goals for tourism development

Tourism Supply Inventory

A comprehensive understanding of which tourism products and services exist at a destination represents a critical early step in tourism development. This unit provides several survey instruments for gathering information from accommodations providers, tour operators, transportation providers, attractions (natural and cultural), and other components of the tourism supply chain in order to summarize destination supply strengths and gaps.

Accommodations

An inventory of accommodations considers all existing providers in the destination including hotels, guesthouses, resorts, B & Bs, self-catering rentals, and RV/camping sites. Important data about accommodations include the following.

- Number of Rooms and Beds
- Segmentation mix of accommodations
- Average *rack rate* (per season)
- Employment figures
- Occupancy rate (per season)
- Average length of stay
- Also key markets, use of green technologies, involvement with local communities, and other elements to the destination's strategy
- Monitoring the accommodation numbers will also help determine if more types of accommodation are needed or if the destination is at full capacity.

TOOL 2.1: CONTENT COLLECTION FORMS—ACCOMODATIONS

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Hotel Name:

Hotel Address:

Hotel Accessibility (Please indicate how to get to the hotel from airport):

Hotel Price Range (Average per person):

❑ $0–25 ❑ $100–199

❑ $26–50 ❑ $200–$500

❑ $51–99 ❑ >$500

Total Number of Rooms:

Check-in Time:

Check-out Time:

Hotel Phone:

Hotel Fax:

Website:

Reservation Email:

On-Site Contact Person:

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

SECTION II: HOTEL DESCRIPTION

Description of Hotel (Please provide a 150-word description to attract guests.)

Amenity Checklist (Please note whether the following amenities are available at the hotel.)

AMENITY	AVAILABLE?	AMENITY	AVAILABLE?
Restaurant		Bar	
Tour/travel desk		Fitness room/gym	
Conference facilities		Spa/hot springs	
Internet access		Library/reading area	
Laundry/dry cleaning		Souvenir/gift shop	

Types of Payment Accepted at Property

Visa ____

Master Card ____

American Express ____

Travelers' Checks ____

Cash Only ____

Languages Spoken at Property

English ___

French ___

Spanish ___

Others _____

SECTION III: PAYMENT POLICIES AND RATES

What do per night hotel room rates include? (Please write yes or no)

Breakfast: ___ Lunch: ___ Dinner: ___

Alcoholic beverages (If yes, please explain policy):

Activities (If yes, please explain policy):

Transfers (If yes, please explain policy):

Child rates (Please explain child ages and policy on rates, etc.):

Charges for additional guests in a room (Please provide details of policy):

Minimum Stays

Some hotels will not offer a nightly rate during peak seasons when minimum stays range from two nights to as much as a week. Please explain any minimum stays required during any season.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Seasonal Information

If room rates vary throughout the year (due to seasonality), please indicate the start and end dates for each season:

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION IV: ROOMS AND PRICING

Please include an additional page for each room type.

Room Type 1 Name (Single, double, suite, etc.)**:**

Total number of type 1 rooms in hotel:

Type 1 description (50 words or less)**:**

Do all type 1 rooms have the same bed configuration? Yes/No

If "no" please explain how many rooms have which type of configuration (For example: "Three rooms have king beds and 2 have two double beds):

Type 1 Room Amenities: (Please check all amenities included in room)

TYPE	YES	TYPE	YES	TYPE	YES
Air conditioning		Fan		Hot water	
Jacuzzi/hot tub		TV with local stations		Radio/CD player	
Balcony/patio		Private bathroom		Refrigerator	
Hammock		Minibar		TV with cable/satellite	
Shared bathroom		Coffee/tea maker		Alarm/clock	
Telephone		Dining area & settings		Living room/sitting area	
Internet access		Fireplace		Cooking facilities/utensils	
Additional amenities:					

Room Rates

Please indicate all room rates that apply to this room (i.e. high season, low season, including breakfast, etc.). Rates per night should not include any additional lodging taxes.

ROOM RATE DESCRIPTION	ROOM RATE (PER NIGHT)

Room Type 2 Name (Single, double, suite, etc.):

Total number of type 2 rooms in hotel:

Type 2 description (50 words or less):

Do all type 2 rooms have the same bed configuration? Yes/No

If "no" please explain how many rooms have which type of configuration (For example: "Three rooms have king beds and 2 have two double beds):

Type 2 Room Amenities: (Please check all amenities included in room)

TYPE	YES	TYPE	YES	TYPE	YES
Air conditioning		Fan		Hot water	
Jacuzzi/hot tub		TV with local stations		Radio/CD player	
Balcony/patio		Private bathroom		Refrigerator	
Hammock		Minibar		TV with cable/satellite	
Shared bathroom		Coffee/tea maker		Alarm/clock	
Telephone		Dining area & settings		Living room/sitting area	
Internet access		Fireplace		Cooking facilities/utensils	
Additional amenities:					

Room Rates

Please indicate all room rates that apply to this room (i.e. high season, low season, including breakfast, etc.). Rates per night should not include any additional lodging taxes.

ROOM RATE DESCRIPTION	ROOM RATE (PER NIGHT)

SECTION V: ACTIVITIES AND TOURS

Please list all activities and tours offered through the property. Use an additional page for each activity.

Activity Name:

Activity Type (please tick all that apply):

- Biking
- Bird watching
- Boating
- Climbing
- Community encounters
- Cultural experiences
- Wildlife viewing
- Hiking/trekking
- Horseback riding
- Caving
- Rafting
- Scuba diving
- Snorkeling
- Volunteering
- Other_____

Activity Description (100 words or less)

Duration:

Start Time:

Level of difficulty (easy, moderate, advanced, extreme):

What is included (equipment, transport, food etc.):

What to bring (clothing, water, sun screen, etc.):

Activity price per person – adult:

Activity price per person – child:

SECTION VI: SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Describe hotel efforts to preserve their natural environment, implement renewable energy sources, encourage sustainable tourism practices, and support local communities. What is hotel doing well in this regard?

Sustainable & Green Practices

Please describe (50 words or less) hotel's sustainable and green practices. Example: Is hotel minimizing waste, water, and electricity use? Cleaning the local area?

Community Tourism

Please describe (50 words or less) how hotel supports community-based tourism. Example: Does it support local organizations or charities such as local sports, schools or orphanages, or the elderly or underprivileged?

Cultural Tourism

Please describe (50 words or less) how hotel enhances the culture of the place. Example: Does it promote local culture and preservation of local customs and traditions? Sell locally made handicrafts? How is the money distributed to the community?

History Interpretation

Does hotel interpret destination history? Does it support programs that educate youth and visitors?

Human Resource Development

Does hotel invest in its staff through extra training or encouraging staff initiatives?

TOOL 2.2: ACCOMODATION INVENTORY

ACCOMMODATION	# PROPERTIES	# ROOMS/SITES	# BEDS	NOTES
Hotel				
Hostel				
Farm stay/home stay/B&B				
RV/camping sites				
Stay with families (no or low fee)				
Nature or eco-lodge				
Rented accommodation/ shared flat				
Time share unit				
Free camping/ campervan				
Other				
Total				

TOUR OPERATORS

Tour operators are vital to the destination value chain, and in many cases manage the majority of the visitor's experiences. All tour operators, including inbound handlers, should be inventoried:

- Number of operators
- Number of clients served
- Length of stay
- Price ranges
- Employment figures
- Average daily expenditure per traveler should.
- Key markets, marketing techniques, and types of packages sold

TOOL 2.3: CONTENT COLLECTION FORM—OPERATOR

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Business Name:
Address:

Phone:

Website:

Which one of the following most accurately describes tour operations?

❑ Large (>20 employees), inbound only
❑ Large, inbound and outbound
❑ Small, inbound – national
❑ Small, inbound and outbound
❑ Small, local area only
❑ Bus Tours
❑ Other (specify)_____

What types of tours does operator provide?

❑ Cultural heritage ❑ Natural heritage (wildlife, camping) ❑ Historical ❑ Nature adventure (biking, rafting, trekking) ❑ Beach ❑ Boat Tours ❑ Other (specify)_____

Do you experience seasonality? If so, what is the % of revenues in high season for:

1 day:_____ 1 night/2 days: _____2/3 days: _____3/4 days_____ 1 week_____

Compared to the % of revenues in low season for:

1 day:_____ 1 night/2 days: _____2/3 days: _____3/4 days_____ 1 week_____

SECTION II: CUSTOMER/MARKET INFORMATION

How many customers has the operator served over the past three years?

2011_____

2010_____

2009_____

Where do most guests come from?

Country # 1 _____ % of all guests _____

Country # 2 _____ % of all guests _____

Country # 3 _____ % of all guests _____

What is the main reason that customers use operator's services?

_____

SECTION 3: BUSINESS INFORMATION

How does operator advertise? (Check all that apply)

Word of Mouth _____ Familiarization tours_____ Pamphlets _____

Travel agents _____ Visitor Information centers _____ Internet _____

Road signs _____ Travel shows_____

Other _____

How many full-time equivalents does operator use in high season? _____

Low season? _____

What is the projected average number of full-time equivalents for next year?

What percentage of the FTEs are guides?

What percentage of guides are independent?

ATTRACTIONS

Attractions—outstanding geological features, significant cultural monuments, important historical events, famous sites—motivate people to become tourists. Without attractions, visitors have no reason to visit, at least touristically. Therefore, it is vital to assess a destination's attractions in order to identify potential markets (if any) and understand the comparative position in the marketplace.

Attractions can be divided into four categories as mentioned in the previous section of this manual. Attempts should be made to visit all attractions within the destination. Data collected will not contribute to quantitative statistics, but rather be qualitative.
First, location data should be gathered, ideally including Global Positioning Systems (GPS) coordinates to enable mapping. Additional data to collect includes:

- Accessibility
- Number of visitors
- Revenue Generated
- Resources consumed/produced
- Current and/or potential uses
- Drawing power

Environmental and socio-cultural aspects of the attraction should also be considered in order to gain an idea of how sensitive the attraction might be to touristic disturbances. *Intangible attractions* should also be considered. Local food and beverages often identify a place, along with arts, and social ambiance. Tuscany is a prime example with its Chianti wine and quintessential Italian cuisine.

The inventory should include photos, videos, and audio to demonstrate outstanding features.

TOOL 2.4: CONTENT COLLECTION FORM—NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

As per the discussion at the outset of the manual, attractions can be nested, open-access, multiple in one destination or site, intangible, shared operation, or spread out over multiple destinations.

SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

Attraction Name:
Location (or intangible; or found within which larger site or destination):
Website (if applicable):
Hours of operation (if applicable):
Entrance fee for foreigners:
Entrance fee for nationals:
Special designations (World Heritage, RAMSAR, outstanding birding area):
Seasonality (# months available):

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF ATTRACTION

100-word description of attraction (Include information about the landscape, flora, fauna, and any cultural or historical assets)

Which characteristics or superlatives make this resource also an attraction?

Safety Issues
Are there any safety issues that tourists should be aware of, such as rip tides, snake bites, or particular crime issues?

SECTION 3: CONSERVATION ISSUES

Describe any environmental or social issues that site visitors should be aware of.

- Are there endangered species living here?
- Do visitors need to be aware of any restrictions, such as not visiting during certain times of year (i.e., nesting seasons), not straying from paths, or not photographing locals?
- Are there rules regarding water conservation, waste disposal, or coral protection?
- Are there environmental programs such as sea turtle nesting, reforestation, or volunteerism?

TOOL 2.5: CONTENT COLLECTION FORM—CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

Note that culture also includes history.

SECTION 1: BASIC INFORMATION

Attraction Name:
Location (or intangible; or found within which larger site or destination):
Website (if applicable):
Hours of operation (if applicable):
Entrance fee for foreigners:
Entrance fee for nationals:
Special designations (World Heritage, RAMSAR, outstanding birding area):
Seasonality (# months available):

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF ATTRACTION

100-word description of attraction (Include information about the landscape, flora, fauna, and any cultural or historical assets)

Which characteristics or superlatives make this resource also an attraction?

Safety Issues
Are there any safety issues that tourists should be aware of, such as rip tides, snake bites, or particular crime issues?

SECTION 3: CONSERVATION ISSUES

Describe any environmental or social issues that site visitors should be aware of.

- Are there rules regarding attire, noise level, or social interaction?
- Are there any conservation programs sponsored by UNESCO World Heritage Center, ICOMOS, non-government organizations, or government?

TOOL 2.6: DESTINATION ATTRACTIONS INVENTORY

The second column below refers to all services that directly support an attraction, including tour operators, transportation, food, housing, guides, communication, gift sales, etc.

ATTRACTION CATEGORY	NO. OF BUSINESSES
Landscape-Geophysical-Aesthetic	
Ecological-Biological	
Cultural-Historical	
Recreational	
Total Number of Businesses in Destination	

Developing a Vision for the Destination

A vision is an exciting picture of a destination's desired future intended to motivate stakeholders to work together to achieve this future. Visioning is most successful when it is participatory and creates an image that integrates all the separate visions of stakeholders. In order for a vision to mobilize resources — ultimately the purpose of a vision — it must find common, higher ground in which each stakeholder sees part of their future. A strong vision then can motivate disparate stakeholders to work together to achieve what otherwise might be unachievable. Unfortunately all too common, many efforts simply write too short, bland, under motivating admixtures of key words contributed by different stakeholders. As a result, no one can identify with the sterile statement and it fails as a project development tool.

Tourism visions, in particular, involve the elaboration of the style of tourism the destination would like to host (ecotourism, culinary, cruise port, allowable ship size, voluntourism, etc.), and who the target market is for the destination. The vision may also include elements of a shared strategy although the *how* rather than the *what* often falls to the mission, objectives, and strategies elements of a process.

Since a vision is only as strong as those who share it, the assessment team will want the broadest possible participation from a diverse set of community representatives. Some questions to ask during the visioning:

- How do you see your destination after tourism development?
- What do you want to see happen?
- What is an acceptable level of change in your community?
- How much of what type of tourism development fits with your image of your destination's future?
- What future state of tourism here really gets you excited to think about?

Ideally visioning is an on-going effort since both individual and collective visions continually evolve and the process must capture that evolution in order to avoid turning sterile (Senge, 2006) the following process incorporates one destination-wide meeting and a month to gather local responses to a draft vision revised and adopted at a final meeting, as a means to get started. The process, though short, is an essential element in establishing tourism development goals.

TOOL 2.7: STEPS TO CONDUCT A VISIONING SESSION

SECTION 1: HOLD A VISIONING SESSION

Seek an experienced group process facilitator to facilitate the visioning process.

Background Information

Provide background information about the destination to orient participants. This includes accommodations capacity, attractions present in the destination, visitor profiles and statistics, challenges present in the tourism industry, etc. Such information comes from sources such as studies, inventories, and government statistics.

Facilities and Materials

A room large enough to sit all participants around tables is required. The room need lots of wall space to hang flip charts. Five or six sheets along with felt-tip pens are needed for each small group of six to ten. Index cards for individual writing and some extra pens or pencils help.

SECTION 2: MEETING AGENDA

Set the Stage

1. The facilitator should introduce him/herself and have the participants introduce themselves, tell why they came, and what they expect from the workshop. Briefly explain the meeting's purpose which is to develop a shared vision of what residents would like their destination to be in ten to twenty years from now.

Looking at the Present

2. Divide participants into groups of eight to ten by asking people to count off by the number of groups. Counting off mixes people with others they may not know as well as mixes up the ones with whom they were originally sitting.
3. Provide each group with flipchart paper and pens.
4. Ask them to draw pictures with no words of their five favorite things to do and five favorite places to go in the area. When finished, tape sheets to the wall and ask a representative from each group to explain their drawings. Leave drawings on the wall for now.

Looking at the Past

5. Have the whole group brainstorm their visions of the destination in "yesteryear." This should be a quick exercise to produce a list of impressions that the facilitator records on newsprint.
6. Tape lists to the wall.

Keeping the Good

7. Quickly review sheets on the wall.
8. Ask the plenary to identify what is the good they want to preserve in their local area? What don't they want see lost or changed?
9. Mark these items on the lists or add them if they aren't already listed.

Building the Vision

10. Ask participants to return to their small groups to complete the statement: "This is the year 2015 [or other target date] and [name] is as good as it can be. It is the kind of place where _____." Suggest they consider the social, economic, and physical aspects in their descriptions. Provide flipchart paper and pens for them to record ideas.
11. Have a representative from each group report to the full group.
12. Tape all pages on the wall.

Creating the Common Vision

13. Ask the whole group to pick out the commonalities of the visions from the small groups. Record them on separate sheets of flipchart paper, one each for social, economic and physical aspects.
14. Write a common vision statement.

Section 3: Seek Out Additional Response to the Draft Vision Statement

15. Between the visioning session and the next assessment team meeting, the local coordinator shares the draft vision statement with community members who did not participate in the visioning session to gather wider public reaction to the statement. He should send copies other community groups to obtain their responses.
16. He should also publicize in local media requesting reactions.

Section 4: Revise the Vision Statement

17. At the next assessment team meeting, the local coordinator reviews with the members all input (possibly hundreds of comments) gathered since the visioning session.
18. The assessment team decides how and to what extent to revise the draft statement to reflect responses. The revised vision statement will be used as the foundation for the goal-setting process.

Section 5: Finding Tourism's Fit

19. Ask the assessment team how tourism can fit with the vision. How can tourism help create the vision? How might it hurt? What forms of tourism, if any, would fit best with the common vision?
20. Record the responses to keep for future consideration of tourism development.

Adapted from Solimar International

TOOL 2.8: MISSION STATEMENTS

The following mission statements were submitted by Destination Marketing Association International members from around the world in 2006 (www.destinationmarketing.org/Resource_Center/Resource_Content_View.asp?Act=VIEW&mResource_ID=10&mContent_ID=40).

- The mission of the XXX DMO is to enhance the economic and environmental wellbeing of our region and members through the promotion of tourism and the comprehensive marketing of our destination.
- The mission of the XXX DMO is to generate economic growth for XXX by producing high volumes of visitors, tax revenue, and travel related jobs.
- To create vibrant growth for the local economy by promoting, developing, and expanding a united visitor industry.
- The XXX DMO serves as an economic catalyst by marketing and promoting our community as THE XXX destination and providing services for tourism events, conventions, leisure and business travel, and advocacy for destination development.
- To attract visitors by promoting XXX as the world's most desirable destination for leisure and business travel.
- The mission of the XXX DMO is to positively impact the area's economy by marketing the region as a travel destination.
- The XXX DMO's mission is to stimulate economic growth in the community by increasing visitor volume and visitor expenditures.
- The XXX DMO will take a dynamic leadership and visionary role to successfully market XXX as a premier tourism and special events destination. Through the development and execution of integrated marketing, communications, sales, and research efforts the XXX will generate revenues and economic benefits of the community at large, members, stakeholders, and the XXX Convention Center.
- To positively impact the area's economy by marketing the region as a travel destination.
- To attract visitors by promoting to be a leader in the Economic Development of XXX region by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs, and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.
- Promote XXX as a destination by attracting tourism. Contribute to the identity and economic wellbeing of the City of XXX. Take a leadership role with community and business partners to provide an outstanding visitor experience.
- The mission of the XXX DMO is to increase awareness of XXX as a visitor destination through a collective sales and marketing approach that stimulates overnight stays and enhances visitor spending and ultimately produces a substantial economic impact for XXX communities.

Setting Overall Goals for Tourism Development

Goals are realistic, measurable targets for the destination's tourism vision. That is, every goal must be consistent with the vision established in the prior section. For example:

- How many inbound tourists does the destination want to attract?
- What alliances do they want to create?
- How many jobs, for whom, at what pay scales, and for what seasons
- What is the anticipated percentage increase of income for local residents?
- How many tourists are too many?

As mentioned above with vision, a participatory process should result in greater resolve and commitment to implement the goals. It also produces a broader range of ideas during the initial brainstorm. As such a group process composed of all stakeholders, at least all those in the foreseen value chain, should identify and prioritize project goals followed by small group work to agree on specific targets for each goal.

Once goals are agreed upon, the destination can identify actions, timelines, and responsible parties to achieve them. Furthermore, if managers set up a monitoring system and they have the capacity to learn from the data that that system generates, then they can adapt their strategy — including the goals and even the vision — based on their experience pursuing these goals.

TOOL 2.9: STEPTS TO CONDUCT A GOAL-SETTING SESSION

SECTION 1: FACILITIES AND MATERIALS

A room large enough to sit all participants around tables is required. The room needs lots of wall space to hang flip charts. Five or six sheets along with felt-tip pens are needed for each small group of six to ten participants. Index cards for individual writing and some extra pens or pencils help.

SECTION 2: MEETING AGENDA

1. Review information gathered in previous steps of this assessment process. The goal setting session begins with reviewing attitude survey results, discussion of the visioning session, vision statement review and responses to the vision statement.
2. Complete a group process to define goals.
3. Ask group members to individually and silently write down all ideas they can think of in response to the question: What should the goals of our tourism assessment and development project be? Think about economic, social, cultural, physical, and environmental goals.
4. Break the entire group down into groups of 6–10 to facilitate discussion and recording of ideas.
5. Ask each group to select a recorder. The recorder writes on the flipchart one idea at a time from each member going around the group "round robin." The rounds continue until all ideas have been recorded. There is no need to record the same idea more than once. While lobbying and criticism are to be avoided, it is important for group members to ask clarifying questions if they don't understand an idea. The ideas should be numbered and recorded large enough so they can be read by the entire group once they are taped on the wall.
6. Have each group examine its list of ideas to determine if any are so similar that one action would accomplish them both. If so, combine them into a single idea.
7. As each group finishes, ask its members to individually vote for the four most important ideas.
8. Next the recorders tally the votes for each idea, voting off ties until each group has arrived at four top priorities.
9. A second round of voting is conducted by the facilitator with the entire group voting on the top four ideas from each of the smaller groups. Again each individual gets four votes. No more than six top priorities should be identified for the entire group.
10. Once the top priorities have been identified, assign one table to each and ask participants to go to the goal that interests them most.
11. These new work groups are asked to describe their goal in as much detail as possible. Try to make goals quantifiable within a specific timeframe. For example, increase family wage jobs by 10% over the next year. Attachment 6-B has more examples of the active nature desired in this goal writing process. The more concrete your goals, the easier it will be for you to build strategies to achieve them. For example, a jobs goal might be described as follows:

- Total Number of Tourism Jobs to Be Created
- Number of Jobs at Specific Annual Wage Levels

  Under $20,000 $20,000–35,000 $35,000 and over
- Number of Seasonal Jobs

  Winter Spring Summer Fall

12. What types of tourism development might provide the desired jobs?
13. When finished, tape the sheets of paper to the wall and ask a representative from each group to explain their drawings. Leave the drawings on the wall for now.

Adapted from Solimar International

TOOL 2.10: SAMPLE GOAL STATEMENTS

Note: Some statements would fit in more than one category.

ECONOMIC

- Minimum 10% increase in tourism-related jobs, personal income, and number of businesses within 4 years
- Lengthen tourism season to 6 months, May through October
- Attract light industry by emphasizing our tourism attractions
- Capture 50% more tourist dollars within 4 years
- Develop a 400-unit RV park for snowbirds
- Make our community a destination point
- Get people to stay in area another day
- Create more diversified jobs in the area

SOCIO-CULTURAL

- Provide a number of social activities, such as festivals, that would draw a wide range of tourists and residents
- Celebrate our ethnic diversity
- Organize more recreational offerings, concerts, and plays monthly
- Afford increased social contacts to improve social skills for youth
- Educate local residents about existing attractions
- Develop intergenerational activities
- Construct a community building
- Educate local residents and visitors about natural resource management to foster respect for natural beauty
- Attract tourists who are respectful, tolerant, and interested in the local environment and quality of life

PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL

- Increase transportation stability, i.e., air, bus, road, rail, and maintenance of same
- Pursue quality/zoned growth in area
- Install new water system
- Undertake long-term cleanup of entrances to town
- Complete restoration of downtown within 10 years
- Make better access to the river/safety factor
- Provide more amenities with campgrounds
- Improve the appearance of human-related visual pollution along travel routes
- Improve sidewalks
- Push for planned growth with complete county-wide plan
- Preserve sensitive areas that relate to plant and wildlife and historical significance

SUMMARY

Inventorying tourism data is an initial step toward further tourism development. A destination vision shapes the purpose and paints a future of tourism development that should mobilize resources. A vision that fails to mobilize resources does not fulfill the function of a vision. Goals break down a vision into more operational units by defining what the project aims to create. A strategy, involving actions, timelines, responsible parties, budgets, etc. tells stakeholders how those goals will be achieved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- City Statistics of the United States
  www.city-data.com

- Destination Marketing Association International
  www.destinationmarketing.org

- Gutierrez, E. 2011 Project Development for Sustainable Tourism: A Step by Step Approach. Online Learning Tools and Resources. Sustainable Tourism: International Cooperation for Development. The George Washington University and USAID.

- USAID/Jordan Tourism Development Project II: Destination Aqaba
  www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Destination_Aqaba_Report.pdf

Unit 3: Auditing the Visitor and Resident Experience

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand the visitor experience value chain
- Design a visitor experience survey and audit the results
- Create a resident attitude survey to monitor attitude changes among the local population and measure impacts on the community
- Establish a destination management system to store data

Now with a tourism inventory, vision, and goals, we need to understand visitors and residents. Understanding who visitors are, why they visit, and how much they spend aids immeasurably in developing destination products.

Additionally, we must gauge resident attitudes. Experience indicates that if residents are unhappy with tourism, less likely it will be successful. We must therefore monitor their attitudes in order to determine whether tourism is benefiting them (or could in the case that it has not yet begun) and in which improvements could increase their satisfaction.

Finally, tourism is a service industry that depends heavily on communication. All destinations can use statistics to understand the size, scope, and impacts of the tourism sector. The destination management system (DMS) compiles this information.

Visitor Experience Value Chain

Although many industries sell products with considerable experience components (restaurants, gymnasiums, car sales, professional sports), perhaps tourism depends more than others on the customer experience. A strong understanding of place combined with a strong understanding of market affords the tourism planner material to create experience opportunities that very specifically target the needs, desires, and expectations of particular market segments (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

One can divide the realization of a tourist experience into four phases:

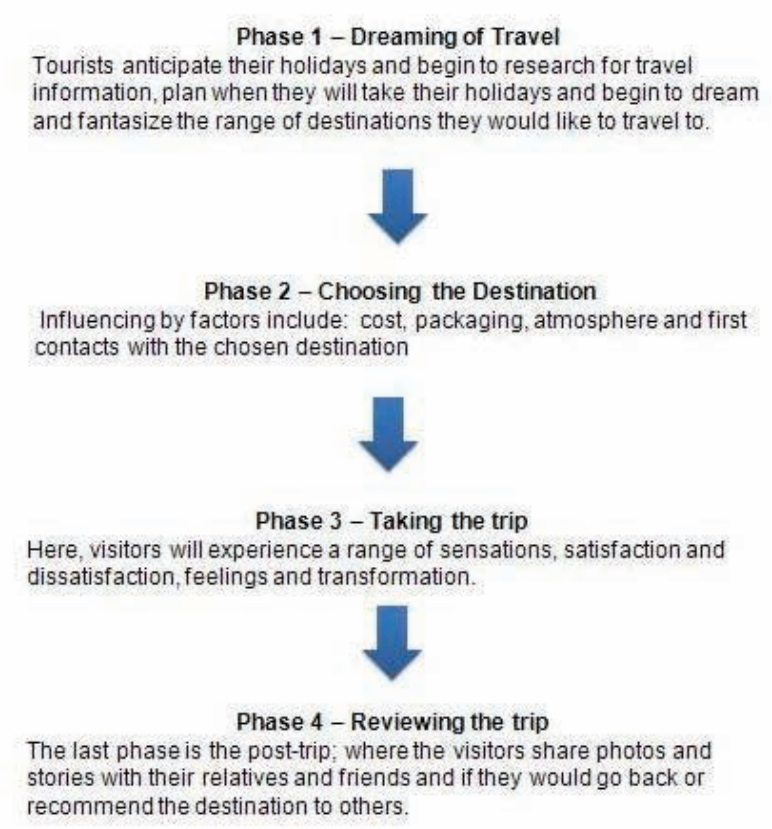


Figure 3.1. Four Phases of a Visitor Experience (Hawkins, 2005)

Designing a Visitor Survey

A *visitor profile* (or *market segment*) describes a variety of characteristics about a certain type of visitor, often including demographic information (age, mode of travel, group size, nationality), psychographic information (values, benefits pursued, desired experience, beliefs), and spending patterns (daily expenditures, types of purchases made, even form of payment). Each profile then provides important baseline information necessary in not only designing tourism products but strategies throughout the tourism value chain, such as economic impact and kinds of infrastructure that might be needed to accommodate certain profiles.

Visitor data is often gathered through visitor questionnaires, although other sources may be even more apt for following visitation trends such as immigration statistics, economic studies, and statistics submitted by hotels and other service providers. Questionnaires normally ask:

- Which types of people visit the destination (demographics)
- How long they stay (demographics)
- What they do (demographics)
- How much they spend (spending patterns)
- How they found out about the destination (demographics)
- Their perception of the site (psychographics)

TOOL 3.1: VISITOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

Survey questionnaires should normally be no longer than 2–3 pages.

Thank you for participating in our visitor survey. Our team of consultants and local participants will consider your responses as we assess the potential for ecotourism development in this area. Please be assured that your responses will be held in confidence. Note that only visitors to this area should fill out this form, not residents.

Is this your first time visiting _____? ❑ yes ❑ no

If you answered no to question #1, how many times, in total, have you visited this area?
_____

Are you traveling ❑ alone ❑ with partner ❑ with friends ❑ with family?

How many people are in your travel party? _____

In which country do you permanently reside?
_____

What was your primary reason for visiting this area? (please choose one)
❑ leisure ❑ business ❑ visiting friends and relatives ❑ other____
❑ education, short-term (less than 1 year) ❑ volunteerism, short-term (less than 1 year)

How long will you be visiting this area? (please choose one)
❑ for the day ❑ 2–4 days ❑ 5-–10 days ❑ 11–20 days ❑ more than 21 days

How did you hear about this area? (please choose one)
❑ radio ❑ television ❑ newspaper ❑ magazine
❑ Internet ❑ travel brochure ❑ tour operator ❑ word of mouth

What was your main mode of transportation to this area? (please choose one)
❑ personal/rented car ❑ airplane ❑ tour bus/vehicle ❑ boat
❑ taxi ❑ other, please specify_____

How important were the following factors in your decision to visit the area? (Please circle the number of the answer that represents your evaluation of each factor.)

FACTOR	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
Good weather conditions	4	3	2	1
Quality of natural scenery and landscapes/environment	4	3	2	1
Opportunity to see wildlife	4	3	2	1
Visits to parks and other pristine natural areas	4	3	2	1
Opportunity to stay in pristine natural environment	4	3	2	1
Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life, and heritage	4	3	2	1
Participation in major cultural or religious events	4	3	2	1
Opportunity to visit an indigenous or traditional communities	4	3	2	1
Opportunities to experience traditional ways of life	4	3	2	1
Opportunities for learning about and experiencing natural and cultural attractions	4	3	2	1
Opportunities for adventure/sports activities	4	3	2	1
Good prices for quality received	4	3	2	1
Good local transportation system	4	3	2	1
Recommendations from a friend/book	4	3	2	1
Facilities for children	4	3	2	1
Accessibility	4	3	2	1
Safety	4	3	2	1
Interest in business investment in visited area	4	3	2	1

What activities have you been doing or will you be doing while in this area? (please check all that apply)

❑ hiking/trekking ❑ wildlife viewing ❑ biking ❑ climbing
❑ swimming ❑ visiting villages ❑ visiting small towns or villages ❑ visiting historical places ❑ cultural heritage sights
❑ visiting national parks ❑ visiting indigenous populations
❑ attending art or music performances (i.e. dancing, drumming, singing, craft demonstrations)

How would you evaluate the following aspects of your stay in the area? (Please circle the number of the answer that represents your evaluation of each factor).

PRODUCTS, SERVICES, & HOSPITALITY	EXCELLENT	GOOD	BAD	VERY BAD	NOT APPLICABLE
Services at the airport	4	3	2	1	0
Maintenance and convenience of the airport	4	3	2	1	0
Personal safety	4	3	2	1	0
Friendliness of the people	4	3	2	1	0
Explanation and convenience of the customs	4	3	2	1	0
National cuisine/drinks	4	3	2	1	0
Accessibility to cultural heritage sites	4	3	2	1	0
Interpretation of cultural heritage sites	4	3	2	1	0
Access to wildlife/plant life viewing	4	3	2	1	0
Interpretation of wildlife/plant life	4	3	2	1	0
Diversity of athletic activities	4	3	2	1	0
Equipment for athletic activities	4	3	2	1	0
Visitor centers	4	3	2	1	0
Organized excursions	4	3	2	1	0
Degree of knowledge of foreign languages from the service personnel	4	3	2	1	0
Helpful police services	4	3	2	1	0
Weather	4	3	2	1	0
Facilities for children	4	3	2	1	0
Shopping opportunities	4	3	2	1	0
Telecommunications	4	3	2	1	0
Convenience and access to local transport	4	3	2	1	0

Would you recommend that a friend of yours visit this area?

❑ yes ❑ no

Why or why not?

_____

Approximately how much money did you spend during *this visit* to the area? Please answer with only the amounts that you/spouse paid. Also, please respond using the currency with which you paid. (i.e. dollars, pounds, CFA, euros, etc.)

Transportation

Airfare _____

Local _____

Restaurants/meals _____

Activities

Shopping _____

Entertainment _____

Lodging

Other _____

TOTAL: _____

Please check the box which is closest to your annual income: (the spaces must be filled in by the Assessment Team according to the local salary range and currency)

1. ❑ _____to_____ 2. ❑ _____to_____

3. ❑ _____to_____ 4. ❑ _____to_____

Your age:

❑ less than 25 years

❑ between 26 and 35 years

❑ between 36 and 45 years

❑ between 46 and 55 years

❑ between 56 and 65 years

❑ over 65 years

17. Please check one: ❑ male ❑ female

What is your profession? _____

What is the highest level of education that you completed?

❑ Grade School ❑ High School ❑ Vocational/Trade School

❑ College ❑ Post-Graduate

TOOL 3.2: CONDUCT A SURVEY

Steps to Conduct a Visitor Survey

The survey process can be overwhelming; therefore, the assessment team should seek professional help in designing, administering, and analyzing the survey results if resources allow. Local businesses, universities, and government bodies may provide survey expertise and support. The following will provide a basic introduction to the survey process. The information provided is meant to be used in the creation of a simple survey. It was adapted from Leones, Julie, 1998, *A Guide To Designing and Conducting Visitor Surveys*, Arizona Cooperative Extension, College of Agriculture, The University of Arizona.

Elements to Consider When Administering a Survey

You will have to:

- Make initial decisions concerning what times of day to survey, where to survey, and the number of days to survey. Consider at which attractions or locations you are going to administer the survey. Also, consider the scale of your survey. Are you surveying the entire region or a single village?
- Manage interviewers and any businesses or other organizations cooperating in the survey
- Manage databases of respondent information.
- Set up a data management system
- Report survey results

Estimating Your Visitor Population and Selecting Your Sample

Typically, surveyors choose a portion, or sample, of the entire population and administer the survey to randomly selected individuals within that sample. Randomness assures that the answers reflect the entire population. Therefore a "sample" population represents the entire destination's population thus making it unnecessary to survey an entire population, usually too costly in any event.

Depending on the destination's tourist season and surveyor's time in the field, there may be a limited survey sampling. There is a formal equation that statisticians use to determine optimal sample size. Generally, the size of the sample needs to be large enough to represent the whole population. Fortunately, in most instances, a complex calculation is unnecessary. Mathematically populations greater than 2,000 require 385 surveys to produce results that obtain trends from the responses with sufficient confidence of their accuracy.

A sample population is usually chosen as randomly as possible. This means that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected to be surveyed. If the flow of visitor traffic is good at the chosen survey locations, ask every other or every third visitor to participate in the survey. Surveyors must follow this rule strictly or else their biases may creep in and influence selection (for example, choosing people from one hotel over another, women over men, nice

looking over mean looking, etc.) which then creates uncertainty in the results. If the destination in general has very few tourists, ask every tourist to participate in the survey. This will not yield a random sample; however, it will give an idea of the current tourist market. If done correctly, the survey results will offer a valuable profile of visitors' interests and perceptions.

Who Conducts the Surveys?

Local community members may help the assessment team administer the survey. When choosing survey interviewers look for the following qualities:

- Good communication skills, speak the local language(s)
- Social maturity and respect for all members of the community
- Friendly and outgoing
- Task oriented and focused
- Ability to independently carry out a tasks

Creating a Resident Profile Survey

Now we have studied the tourism supply and the market demand, what remains are community perceptions of tourism. Since residents often first feel the impacts of tourism, they represent a vital stakeholder.

When done correctly, tourism provides opportunities to generate wealth and conserve natural and cultural resources that might otherwise be destroyed or lost. Tourism can also evoke a sense of pride in local culture. The local population, however, can suffer at the hands of tourist encroachment.

Once a resident survey provides baseline information on attitudes, the DMO can then monitor and manage those perceptions by influencing the tourism development. A successful resident attitude survey ascertains resident experiences with tourism earnings, employment, infrastructure, site access, food and water access, safety, destination stewardship, cost of living, and overall quality of life. Community demographics in terms of race, gender, ability, and education should also be captured and monitored. These indicators could red flag potential alienation of at-risk populations. Results also could influence tourism development to improve environmental, social, and economic issues.

The very same community research can also serve to educate the community not only about tourism benefits and risks, but inspire them to take pride in their heritage.

BOX 3.1

Thailand Heritage Sites

The government of Thailand encourages its local population to visit natural and cultural attractions by making entrance fees to all attractions affordable for all Thai citizens. It is Thai belief that all historic and sacred sites are part of the national heritage and therefore belonging to all Thais equally. Consequently equal access must be granted to all Thai nationals, regardless of socioeconomic status. An identification card issued by the district or provincial authorities allows Thai citizens to experience attractions at a reduced rate from the rate charged to tourists.

TOOL 3.3: SAMPLE RESIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey questionnaires should normally be no longer than 2–3 pages. In the interest of providing several sample questions, the following questionnaire is longer.

SECTION 1: ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM

Do you like having tourists visit your community?
1 = Yes 2 = No

Would you say that tourists are friendly or unfriendly towards the local people?
1 = Very friendly 2 = Friendly 3 = Indifferent 4 = Unfriendly 5 = Very unfriendly

Are there places in this community which should be off limits to tourists?
1 = Yes 2 = No

If "Yes," please mention these places:

Have you noticed any changes in your community as a result of tourist visits here?
1 = Yes 2 = No

If "Yes," how do you regard those changes?
1 = Positive 2 = Negative

What is the general reaction of this community towards tourists visiting this area?
1 = Very positive 2 = Positive 3 = Indifferent 4 = Negative 5 = Very negative

SECTION 2: ATTITUDES ON EFFECTS OF TOURISM

To get an idea of your views regarding tourism in this area, please indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement with each of the following statements.

NOTE: In this survey, "tourists" refer to visitors to the region but who live outside the region.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Tourism would make local people feel inferior about their culture.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism would help villagers better appreciate their community.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am concerned that tourism would take way our natural resources such as land, food, water, and wood.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism would increase crime in the area.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism development would increase protection of natural areas.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
More people of this community should become involved full-time in the tourism business.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
International tourists would greatly improve our community.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Environmentally destructive activities should be discouraged.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourists would crowd local residents out of residential areas.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Nature/game viewing trails should be monitored by local people.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My family's income and quality of life would increase if tourists were to purchase this area's services and activities.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The current rules to manage area resources are adequate.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Additional rules and regulations regarding resource use need to be drafted.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The community needs to monitor forest and marine resource use.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

We should take steps to restrict tourism development.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Decisions about how much and what kind of tourism we should have are best left to us to make.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Decisions about how much and what kind of tourism we should have are best left to the private sector to make (e.g., business entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations).	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Decisions about how much and what kind of tourism we should have are best left to the public sector (government).	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tourism activities and services should have different fees for residents and foreigners.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Biodiversity conservation within this area contributes to our wellbeing.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Establishing a Destination Management System

In order to organize the data collected so far, destinations managers could create a destination management system (DMS). A DMS is a database for the collection, manipulation, and distribution of information in all its forms. Unit 5 illustrates how to assemble a DMS. This information includes:

- Supply inventory and performance of hotels, tour operators, attractions, restaurants, etc. (Unit 2)
- Events, festivals, activities, shopping
- Visitor profiles and spending patterns (Unit 3)
- Resident survey results (Unit 3)
- Social, economic, and environmental impacts (Unit 1)

In its simplest format, DMS information can be compiled into a catalogue of destination services and other information. In a more sophisticated format, this catalogue can become part of the destination's website. www.zoomsrilanka.com illustrates the destination's collection of data and portrays this clearly for visitors.

Figure 3.2. Zoom Sri Lanka.

How can the DMS be used?

- Organizes information
- Facilitates public and private collaboration
- Enables a destination to offer dynamic packaging and reach a global market of customers through an internet presence

Cumbria Tourism in the UK has a DMS that manages information about accommodations, attractions, events, restaurants, activities, shopping, cycle routes, towns, villages, and beautiful vista spots. This information is then distributed to a network of 19 associated websites. In 2003 this attributed to £15 million worth of accommodation reservations (www.cumbriatourism.org/marketing/dms.aspx.) Cumbria makes gathering information for tourism suppliers easy by providing easy to download forms as links on their website, www.cu-ctb.cu.thedms.co.uk/marketing/dms.aspx

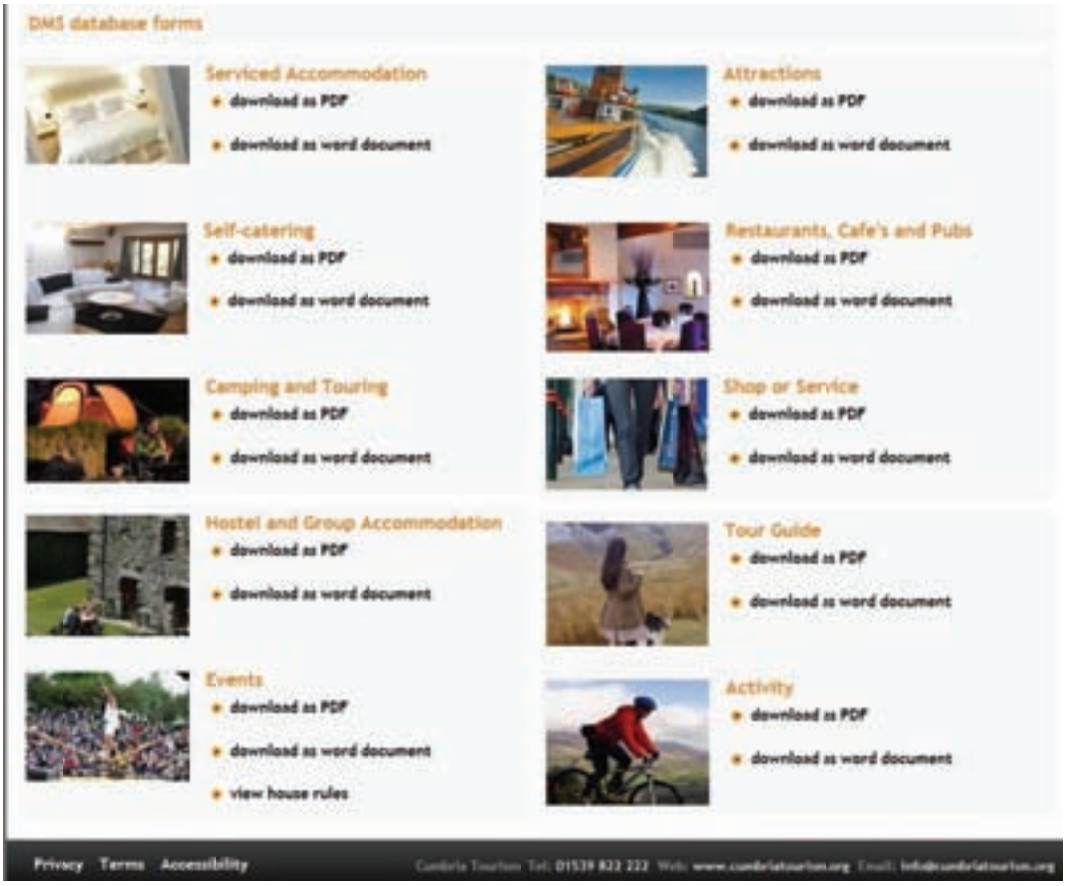


Figure 3.3. Cumbria Tourism DMS Database Forms.

Sophisticated systems can be set up through third party providers, such as:

new mind
e-tourism solutions

SENTIAS

CODEGEN
www.codegen.net

Blue Robin
Building Customized eBusiness Infrastructures

SUMMARY

- Data about visitors' and residents' are incredibly important for sustainable tourism.
- Understanding the VEVC captures tourists' motivation, decisions, and experiences that they share with friends and relatives.
- Taking advantage of information about visitor experiences increases a destination's competitiveness
- Collecting visitor demographics, psychographics, and spending can yield useful insights to the effectiveness of destination management.
- Collecting resident attitude data provides insight into the effects of tourism on the community.
- Bringing together all tourism data into a centralized DMS allows managers to analyze destination competitiveness as well as the destination's overall progress.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Blue Robin Destination Management Software
  http://bluerobin.com/destination_management_software.html

- CodeGen Travel Software Solutions
  www.codegen.net

- Cumbria Tourism Destination Management System
  www.cu-ctb.cu.thedms.co.uk/marketing/dms.aspx

- New Mind Destination Management Technology
  www.newmind.co.uk

- Sentias eTourism Software
  www.sentias.com/e-tourism

- Sri Lanka Tourism
  www.srilanka.travel

- Tourism Authority of Thailand
  www.tourismthailand.org

Unit 4: Utilize Clusters to Gain a Competitive Edge

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to understand:

- What clusters are and how to identify potential cluster partnerships
- How to unite existing tourism stakeholders to form an effective cluster
- How to organize clusters into sustainable business practices

Tourism Clusters as a Competitive Edge

Armed with a vision and long-term goals formulated in Unit 2, a destination can now unify stakeholders in a *cluster* in order to gain a competitive edge over other destinations.

A cluster is a working group focused on increasing destination competitiveness. It is composed of participants from throughout the tourism value chain, including government agencies, tourism promotion authorities, private sector associations and individual firms, tourism and hospitality training bodies, and NGOs (conservation organizations, cultural heritage promotion groups).

The cluster can accomplish more than its member groups can do alone. With a cluster, more resources become available to develop and market tourism products more effectively.

The cluster approach is increasingly being employed for tourism development in developing and transitional economies. A cluster can facilitate that SMEs compete globally because of better access to information and specialized resources, flexibility, and rapid adoption of innovations. Product quality, international competitiveness and hence sustainability, consequently, increase as linkages in a local economy grow stronger.

USAID Discovered Cluster Competitive Initiatives

The following are examples of clusters supported by USAID.

- Sri Lanka — ceramics, coconut fiber, jewelry, and tourism
- Mongolia — cashmere and tourism
- Dominican Republic — horticulture, traditional tourism, and eco-tourism
- Croatia — wood products and tourism
- Bulgaria — traditional tourism and eco-tourism

Tourism experts Crouch & Ritchie (1999) created a systemic model for destination competitiveness within the tourism industry. This model has four main components:

- Core resources and attractions
- Supporting factors and resources
- Destination management
- Qualifying determinants

Core resources and attractors such as culture and history can be the fundamental criteria for why visitors choose one destination over another. Supporting factors and resources such as infrastructure provide a firm foundation upon which a destination's tourism industry can be established. Whereas the preceding two components lay largely beyond the reach of tourism professionals, destination management does fall within the power of tourism managers to influence. The last component, qualifying determinants, refers to situational conditions such as location and safety, which determine the scale, limit, or potential of the destination. These are also largely out of the control of destination managers.

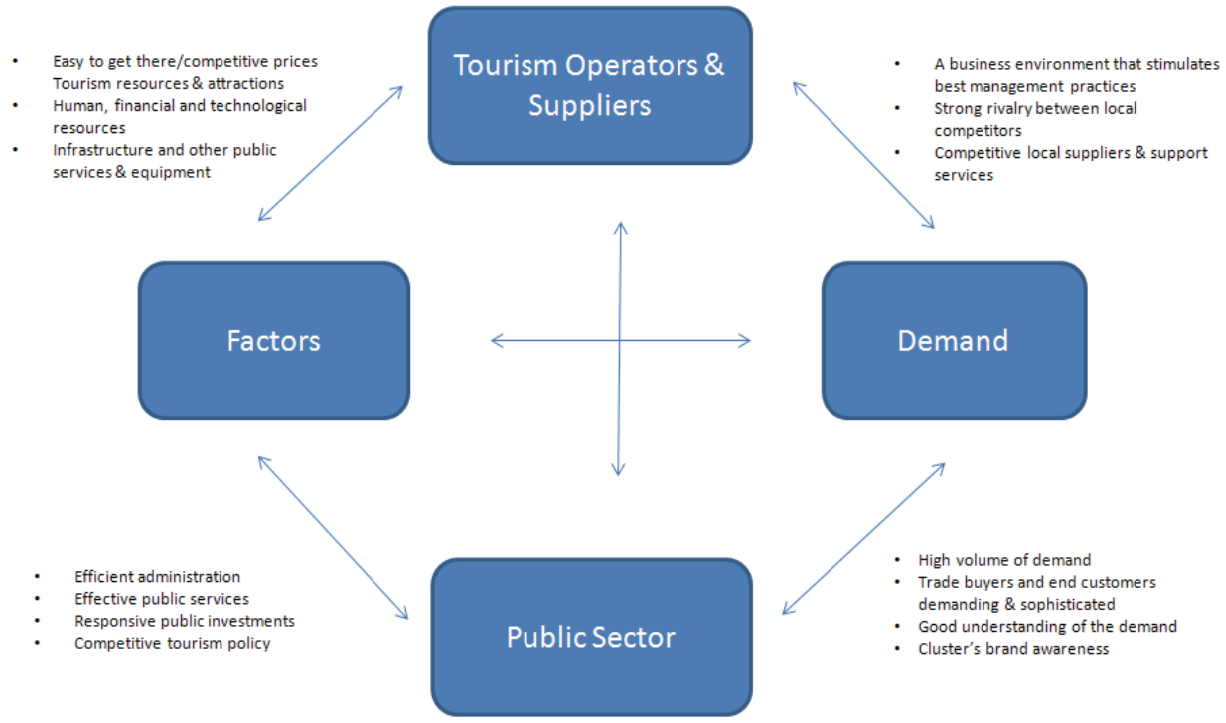


Figure 4.1. Competitive Diamond of Tourism Clusters (E Bordas, WTO, Adapted from M. Porter)

How to Unite Existing Tourism Stakeholders to Form an Effective Cluster

If an organized tourism cluster does not exist, it takes time to develop. Organizers might start with meetings of tourism stakeholders. Every person involved in tourism, directly or indirectly, is welcomed and should participate in these meetings. An outside facilitator should facilitate strategy development to jump-start a sustainable tourism cluster. Existing tourism firms are often too focused on their own business to consider the larger tourism industry.

As clusters develop trust, awareness, and cohesiveness grows. One way to build trust is work together in trade shows, study tours, product development, and if possible, policy development with the government.

How to Organize Clusters into Sustainable Business Practices

Based on the experience of existing clusters, it may take at least 2–3 years to fortify collaboration enough for it to begin to yield benefits such as increased competitiveness.

The key to longevity is quality leadership. These champions remove barriers to collaboration and traditional distrust. Clusters are more collaborative and confidence grows through continued work together and successful experiences.

Monitoring the cohesion and effectiveness within the cluster is beneficial for progress. An assessment tool is provided below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Cluster Assessment Tool

	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE
The cluster has a clear purpose and direction			
The cluster has a realistic time table for delivery			
The cluster members understand and are committed to improvement			
The cluster is widely inclusive both in the range of organizations involved and in their seniority			
Cluster members demonstrate trust, respect, and mutual support			
There are clear channels of communication			

among cluster members			
Cluster members share their learning with others			
Cluster members ask each other for support and receive it			
The cluster delivers success and demonstrates it.			

Adapted from Network Assessment Tool, *Building Networks of Practice* by Olivier Serrat, 2009

BOX 4.1

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BIH) AND SRI LANKA

A comparative study of USAID tourism cluster initiatives in the developing economies of BiH and Sri Lanka illustrate a Top 10 for tourism cluster development.

1. An external, objective facilitator to help convene a cluster and facilitate strategy development and implementation is important to jump-start the creation of a sustainable tourism cluster.
2. Tourism cluster development must include all key stakeholders and connect to all points in the industry value chain.
3. The presence of cluster champions is critical to energize and mobilize broader cluster participation.
4. Building cluster cooperation around cross-industry initiatives is critical to building confidence, trust, and experience benefits of industry-wide collaboration.
5. Contribution of cluster members to activities is essential to strengthen commitment and a sense of ownership in an industry-wide strategy.
6. Improving public awareness of local populations about tourism's potential benefits is central to achieving cluster goals.
7. Destination management capacity at the local level needs priority.
8. Integrating the public sector into the cluster is important to reform policy essential to tourism growth.
9. Tourism clusters need to develop performance measuring systems.
10. Developing a sustainable tourism cluster takes time.

Hawkins & Calnan, 2009

Route for The Abraham Path

Figure 4.2. The Abraham Path.

The Abraham Path is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian organization founded in 2005. Abraham's Path is a cultural tourism route that threads together the stops that Abraham made on his way to Jerusalem, many of which are the world's most fabled historic sites, beautiful landscapes, and revered holy places. Many people now walk the path, a network of local and national trails, of Abraham's travels. Retracing this journey provides an opportunity to connect people of all faiths and cultures and recognize a shared humanity.

Interestingly this thematic route also connects various tourism clusters that span across regions and countries. The journey travels through Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. For locals, this tourism not only offers financial benefits, but also allows them to interact with people from other countries whom otherwise they might not ever see in a lifetime. Cultural exchanges occur for both visitors and hosts as they learn about each other's backgrounds. In the Duma Village of Palestine, women welcome visitors into their home to show their genuine hospitality and teach visitors from other nationalities how to cook local foods.

Not only does the initiative have offices in Ankara, Amman, Beirut, Bethlehem, Boulder (US), Cambridge (US), Jerusalem, and Sao Paolo, but people around the world have created other spin-off paths (Ury, 2010).

Summary

- A cluster is a working group that increases destination competitiveness composed of participants from all points of the tourism value chain, including government agencies, tourism promotion authorities, private sector associations and individual firms, tourism and hospitality training bodies, and NGOs.
- Clusters can mobilize many more resources than its members can alone.
- Cluster longevity depends on quality leadership.
- Communication and collaboration between all members can lead to a successful cluster.

For More Information

- The Abraham Path
  www.abrahampath.org

Unit 5: Establishing Destination Management Organizational Partnerships

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand the specific roles of the DMO
- Engage residents and the business community on destination stewardship

A logical extension of enhancing destination competitiveness through clusters is establishing a DMO. DMOs assist existing clusters and increase tourism through building extensive private-public partnerships, developing marketing strategies, and creating visitor information centers for inbound tourists.

The DMO is an implementation body for the tourism strategy, offering apolitical continuity and integrity to the destination development process and serving the interests of the entire value chain. DMOs are formal structures that build on cluster efforts to manage and market the destination. The large American state of California has a number of successful DMOs, many overlapping: a statewide organization, a regional organization on the North Coast, and a DMO for the city of San Francisco. They all work collaboratively, sharing information and resources.

DMOs market the destination and coordinate individual businesses and organizations. Common forms of clusters include Geotourism councils (see Unit 1), convention and visitors bureaus, or tourism offices in local government. DMOs operate at the national, regional, and local levels.

A major DMO function is to create a master management plan and destination marketing strategy. Typically, local-level DMOs operate tourism information office, frequently with a retail shop. Some forms of regional-level DMOs are heavily involved in regional promotion and destination management. In some cases destinations may be covered by several DMOs at various levels, each sharing information with one another for different audiences.

DMOs work closely with the tourism businesses and organizations interested in the destination, including hotels, attractions, parks, travel agencies, tour operators and guides, outfitters, restaurants, retail outlets, and conference venues.

THE ROLE OF THE DMO

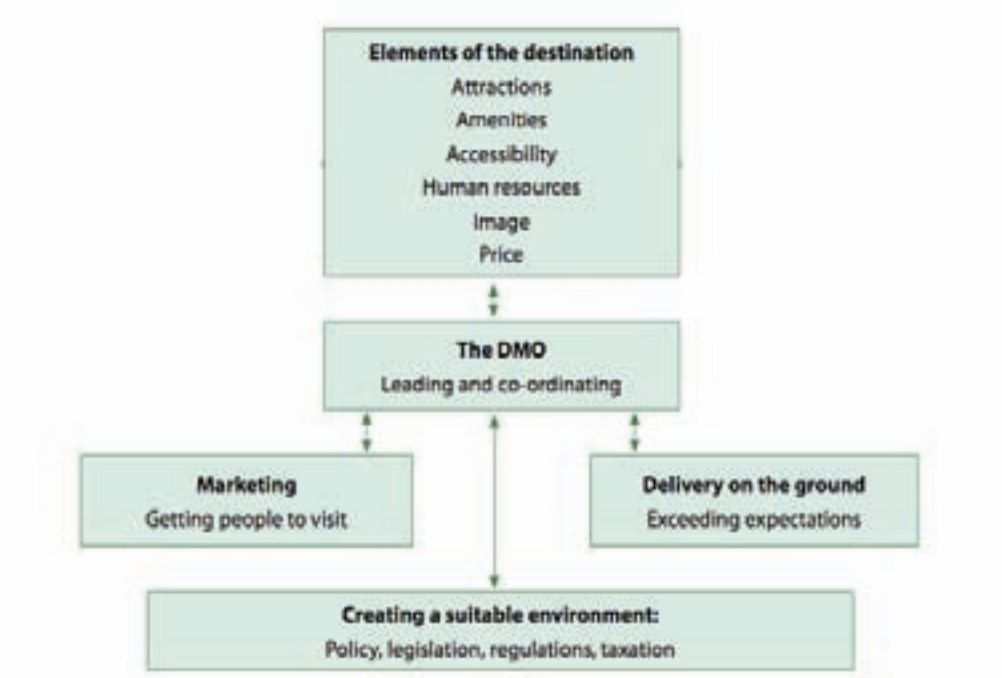


Figure 5.1. A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management (UNWTO, 2007)

DMOs should meet the needs of destinations, whether marketing, coordinating stakeholders, influencing business climate, or assisting human resource development. The DMO should heavily influence the destination's final export — the visitor experience.

Common characteristics of a DMO include:

- Being an independent, non-profit organization
- A membership-based organization comprised of a mixture of public, private, non-profit, and academic tourism stakeholders from the region
- Governed by a board of directors or executive committee reflective of the membership and the composition of the destination
- Comprehensive and detailed set of regulations and by-laws published and available to any interested party
- Diverse set of revenue streams: membership dues, hotel taxes, retail opportunities, online booking commissions, advertising in publications and websites
- Services mostly provided free to end users

Box 5.1

MALDIVES TOURISM MASTER PLAN

In 2007, the Government of the Maldives, in partnership with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, undertook its third comprehensive master planning for the island nation in the Indian Ocean. With a number of challenges, from a difficult transportation infrastructure to growing negative environmental impacts, the government of the Maldives understood the importance of long-term planning to ensure a strong and sustainable growth in their tourism industry. Their master plan provides an exceptional example of the comprehensive and strategic nature of the process: The complete master plan can be found at www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Maldives_Tourism_Plan_2007_2011.pdf.

TOURISM STATISTICS AND MONITORING

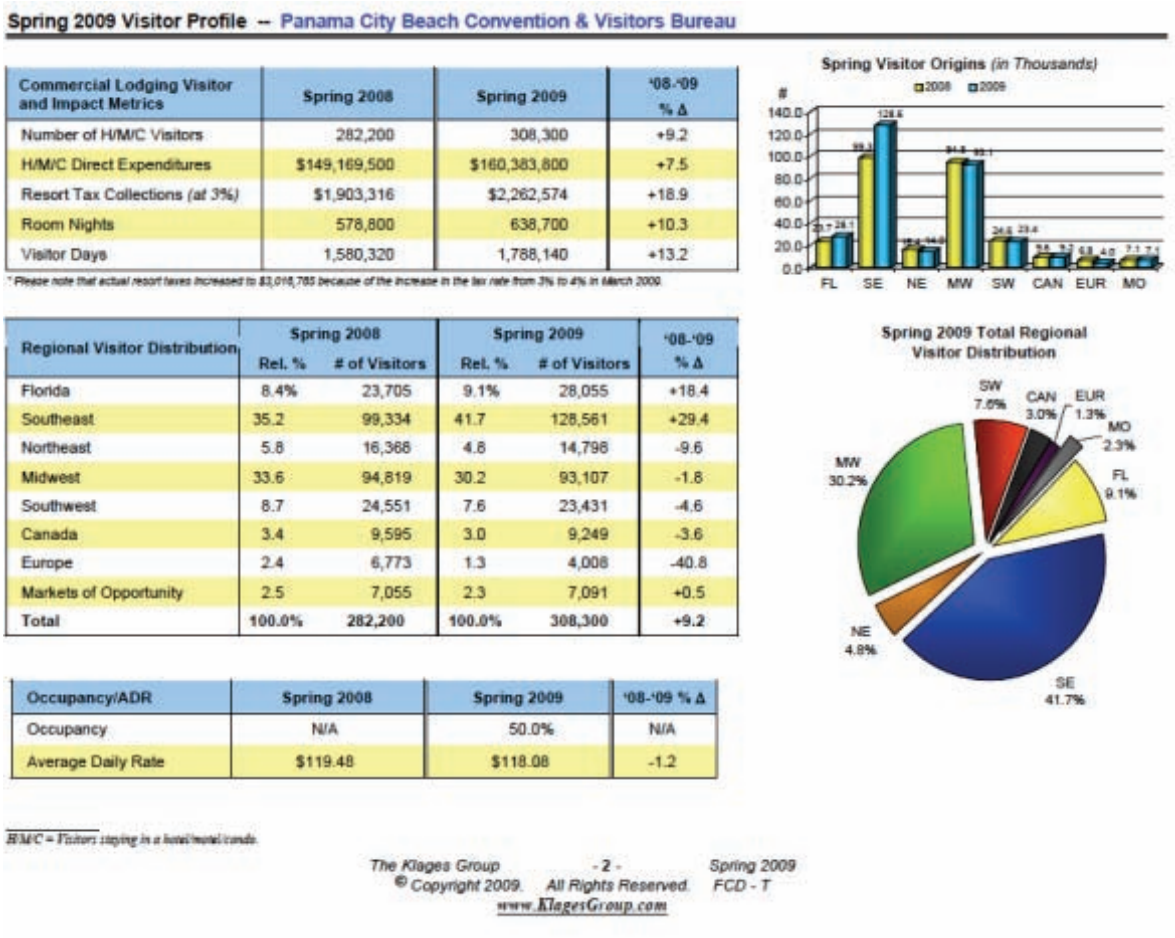
High-quality statistics allow a DMO to make strategic changes to programming and maximize resources. Often, government agencies collect baseline tourism statistics about arrivals and revenues as part of immigration and tax collection systems. A DMO can gather data from a variety of sources to provide a better understanding of tourism supply and demand at the destination and beyond.

Industry Indicators

DMOs can use tourism statistics to inventory destination products, assess capacity, monitor changes, and better ensure market positioning by ensuring that rates and availability are commensurate with the competition. The most common means to collect industry data is through a survey, either online or in person (see Unit 2).

Data should be collected regularly. Many businesses only contribute their internal data with strict confidentiality. Any analysis that relies on data shared by businesses should be shared with those who contributed.

Some of the best tourism statistics are kept by destinations that rely most heavily on tourism revenue. The City of Panama City Beach, Florida monitors travel patterns and traveler satisfaction in order to maintain a competitive edge. The Panama City DMO publishes quarterly reports to keep key stakeholders informed (Figure 5.2).



Spring 2009 Visitor Profile -- Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

Commercial Lodging Visitor and Impact Metrics	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	'08-'09 % Δ
Number of H/M/C Visitors	282,200	308,300	+9.2
H/M/C Direct Expenditures	$149,169,500	$160,383,800	+7.5
Resort Tax Collections (at 3%)	$1,903,316	$2,262,574	+18.9
Room Nights	578,800	638,700	+10.3
Visitor Days	1,580,320	1,788,140	+13.2

* Please note that actual resort taxes increased to $3,016,785 because of the increase in the tax rate from 3% to 4% in March 2009.

Spring Visitor Origins (in Thousands)

Regional Visitor Distribution	Spring 2008 Rel. %	Spring 2008 # of Visitors	Spring 2009 Rel. %	Spring 2009 # of Visitors	'08-'09 % Δ
Florida	8.4%	23,705	9.1%	28,055	+18.4
Southeast	35.2	99,334	41.7	128,561	+29.4
Northeast	5.8	16,368	4.8	14,796	-9.6
Midwest	33.6	94,819	30.2	93,107	-1.8
Southwest	8.7	24,551	7.6	23,431	-4.6
Canada	3.4	9,595	3.0	9,249	-3.6
Europe	2.4	6,773	1.3	4,008	-40.8
Markets of Opportunity	2.5	7,055	2.3	7,091	+0.5
Total	100.0%	282,200	100.0%	308,300	+9.2

Spring 2009 Total Regional Visitor Distribution

Occupancy/ADR	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	'08-'09 % Δ
Occupancy	N/A	50.0%	N/A
Average Daily Rate	$119.48	$118.08	-1.2

H/M/C = Visitors staying in a hotel/motel/condo.

The Klages Group - 2 - Spring 2009
© Copyright 2009. All Rights Reserved. FCD - T
www.KlagesGroup.com

Figure 5.2. Spring 2009 Visitor Profile. Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, http://www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/

Common industry indicators include:

- Hotels
- Available rooms
- Occupancy rate: Number of room-nights booked Number of rooms x Number of days in a month x 100
- Average Daily Rate (ADR): Total revenue earned by the provider number of rooms sold that day
- Revenue per available room (RevPAR): Revenue from rooms/total number of rooms available
- Number of tour operators
- Personal trips: number of excursions led x number of people in attendance
- Average daily excursion rate: cost of one excursion/days on the excursions

Traveler Indicators

Understanding visitor profiles helps to identify target markets, craft meaningful messages, and develop products and resources in such a way that they meet particular demands. Surveys also reach travelers and can be given while visitors wait in line for an attraction, during a transfer from one location to another, or left at the accommodation to be filled out. Some DMOs reward those that fill out surveys with a small token of appreciation. A disclaimer of strict confidentiality should also be given to the survey taker. Common questions for the traveler include:

- Age, gender, race
- Travel party size
- Point of origin
- Length of stay at the destination
- Average daily expenditure
- Types of activities planned and completed
- Type of traveler (independent, group, tour)
- Methodology for booking travel arrangements
- Level of satisfaction

Above all, indicators should abide by five key elements outlined by UNWTO (2007):

- Relevance to the selected issue
- Feasibility of obtaining and analyzing needed information
- Credibility of information and reliability for users of the data
- Clarity and understandability
- Comparability over time and across jurisdictions and regions

While data analysis and survey methodology properly require a much deeper exploration, key understandings are:

- Participants should understand the true purpose of the survey before administering it.
- Surveyors must convey strict confidentiality and results will only be published in aggregate form

Industry Advocacy

As a membership organization, the DMO communicates regularly with stakeholders to learn their concerns and ideas and reach a destination-wide consensus on salient issues. In turn, the DMO can represent stakeholder interests before the Ministry of Tourism and other national government agencies.

The DMO advocates on behalf of the industry to national and regional governments, investors, non-profit organizations, citizens groups, and indigenous populations By the DMO's facilitating regular conversations among its members, main issues can be addressed and consensus reached that can be shared with affected parties at the destination. The DMO can also strengthen understandings about efforts and challenges via informational meetings, seminars, and other thematic events focused on cultural heritage management, environmental stewardship, or transportation.

BOX 5.2

THE LEE ISLAND VISITOR AND CONVENTION BUREAU

The Lee Island Visitor and Convention Bureau represents a stretch of land in Southwest Florida, USA. It holds regular meetings to remind government and business leaders about the impacts of the tourism industry. The organization also releases current visitor research and travel data to the public and news media. A printed transcript of these press conferences, called the "Tourism Development Council Report to the Industry" is distributed to the organizations' 700 partners. Topics have included the state of air transportation, condition of the local shoreline, and baseline data regarding tourism in the region. The bureau also sponsors a monthly marketing meeting, develops a "tourism minute" feature on local radio newscasts, and an annual event during National Tourism Week.

www.leevcb.com

ASSET ADVOCACY

The tourism industry has a vested interest in the well-being of the environment, quality of life of the people, and the preservation of cultural elements that create the basis for visitation. The DMO works with local partners such as non-profit organizations and educational institutions to identify potential threats and improvements for the destination's assets. The DMO organizes working groups and task forces to minimize impacts on at-risk assets such as water, solid waste, and sacred sites.
Solid waste is one of the greatest threats to Bocas del Toro, Panama. This in turn has damaged visitor satisfaction. On Earth Day 2010, the DMO Bocas Sustainable Tourism Alliance co-sponsored with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute a beach clean-up. BSTA provided food, drinks, and community outreach. Ninety-six volunteers collected 850 pounds of garbage in two hours, of which over half went to recycling.

Figure 5.3. Beach Clean-Up in Bocas del Toro. (Photo: Chrystel Cancel)

Industry Support, Growth, and Training

DMOs can also provide training to members to improve destination management, business practices, and community interaction. For example, in January 2010 the Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association (a destination management company) in collaboration with USAID sponsored The George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies to teach a two-week course on destination management, with emphasis on minimizing tourism impacts, preserving heritage, and optimizing tourism contributions to economic development of host communities. The program targeted destination managers and marketers, hotel developers, tour operators, business owners, government officials, and others concerned with the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of tourism destinations.

Engaging Residents

Destination residents have a large stake in the tourism industry. Not only can economic revenue drive growth, but the way in which tourism is managed can have serious impacts on everyday lives. In urban environments, highly-visited tourism sites during peak season can generate additional vehicle traffic and cause transportation difficulties for residents. In some cases, the development of new tourism facilities may compete for local resources such as electricity and water. In order to maintain a positive relationship between the tourism industry and local residents, the DMO can:

- Invite residents and community leaders to participate in the DMO's executive council or board of directors
- Regularly solicit resident feedback on a website or at strategic locations such as civic centers and government buildings
- Hold regular forums to discuss salient topics

Local residents that own businesses can also:

- Create a space within the DMO's offices and to place marketing material
- Advertise within DMO publications and on the website
- Develop cooperative advertising agreements
- Create a "friends of" program that allows residents and businesses to express their commitment to tourism
- Create online affinity contests that ask residents to tell travelers about sites in the destination
- Hold regular conversations about the tourism value chain and how local businesses can better communicate and cooperate in order to provide local goods and services to the tourism industry
- Make use of social media to gather input and share stories.

TOOL 5.1: OUTLINE OF POTENTIAL DMO MEMBERS

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEMBER CATEGORIES	ORGANIZATION/ BUSINESS NAME	ORGANIZATION/ BUSINESS TYPE	CONTACT NAME	COMMITMENT LETTER STATUS
Conservation NGO				
Communities				
Indigenous peoples and other cultural minorities				
Artists & artisans				
Traditional performing Artists (dance, music, theater, storytelling, reenactments, etc.)				
Destination management				
Culinary, farm, and restaurant programs, agritourism				
Other stakeholder groups emblematic of the local				
Government				
Private companies compatible with sustainable tourism				

TOOL 5.2: SAMPLE LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS

May 2009

Dear Tourism Stakeholder of Bocas:

On behalf of the Bocas Sustainable Tourism Alliance (BSTA) initiative, I would like to invite you to join a regional marketing committee along with other leading representatives from the private sector, local government, and local communities. This committee will be an integral part of the newly established destination management organization as it will oversee and provide inputs, feedback, and consensus over the development and implementation of the marketing and branding for the destination of Bocas del Toro. The marketing will promote sustainable, nature, and community-based tourism by promoting Bocas del Toro as a leading sustainable tourism destination in Panama and beyond.

If interested, your participation on the marketing committee can take two forms:

1. Attend meetings of the BSTA to discuss and approve marketing and branding strategies
2. Participate in online surveys to provide inputs into the marketing methods, branding, and strategies

Please let me know if you would like to help us with this important initiative by serving on the marketing committee and how you would like to participate.

Thank you for your support. Our combined efforts will impact Bocas del Toro by shaping its image as a sustainable tourism destination.

Kind regards,

[NAME]

TOOL 5.2: MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT SAMPLE

This tool can be used to recruit members to the DMO. It contains the following components:

- Membership recruitment kit
- Folder with printed color label
- Membership registration brochure
- Factsheet about BSTA & partners
- Business card of BSTA executive director/member contact

MEMBERSHIP WELCOME PACKAGE

- Welcome letter from BSTA including list of benefits, network contacts, and instructions/content collections forms for any next steps
- Stickers for business and laminated member certificate for storefront/reservation desk;
- Low-resolution "Member of BSTA" digital logo for their website and high resolution for print materials. See graphic at left.
- Sustainable tourism toolkit or document (digital or print) to help businesses work towards becoming more sustainable
- Press release about the launch of the consumer program (if ready)

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Full-page promotional description on the Bocas del Toro website;
- Right to distribute sales brochures of their tourism facilities at the tourism information center
- Business linkages with local and international tour operators to promote sustainable tourism activities in the archipelago
- Access to hotel and activities booking service through the tourism information center and a online reservation system
- Special distinction as a tourism business supporting sustainable tourism initiatives in Bocas del Toro with a "Member of Bocas Sustainable Tourism Alliance" logo and certificate or sticker
- A feature business listing in the sales directory available to visitors at the Bocas information center and distributed to tour operators in Costa Rica and Panama City
- Opportunity to be featured in press/FAM trips
- Subscription to Bocas Sustainable Tourism Alliance newsletters
- Access to valuable market research findings
- Discounts on additional online advertising to travelers at www.discoverbocasdeltoro.com
- Discounts on public relations services with ATMS (15%) and Travmedia (30%)
- Discounts with network partners (GWU Online sustainable tourism courses, etc.);
- 500 bookmarks or postcards per year to disseminate to clients featuring responsible travel tips

SUMMARY

- The DMO is an independent organization that fills an important gap by advocating for the comprehensive needs of the tourism industry as well as local residents.
- DMOs can be organized at any geographical or political level
- DMOs have a number of business models, but generally are non-profit, membership-based with public sector support.
- Traditionally, DMOs focus mostly on marketing activities related to promotion of the entire destination.
- DMOs can also provide other services that raise the profile and competitiveness of the destination, such as:
- Tourism master planning
- Tourism statistics and monitoring
- Asset advocacy
- Industry support, growth, and training
- Resident engagement

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Master Planning Examples:

- National Tourism Master Plan: Botswana
  www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Botswana_Tourism_Master_Plan_2000.pdf

- Regional Tourism: Zanzibar and Pemba, Tanzania
  www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Tanzania_Tourism_Master_Plan_2003.pdf

- State Level: Wyoming Tourism Master Plan
  www.projectfrontdoor.com

- Municipality Level: Buffalo City, South Africa
  www.buffalocity.gov.za/municipality/keydocs/tourism_masterplan/masterplan.stm

Other Sources of Information

- The George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies
  www.gwutourism.org/iits/

- BEST-EN (Educational Network)
  www.besteducationnetwork.org

- World Travel and Tourism Council
  www.wttc.org

- United Nations World Tourism Organization
  www.unwto.org

- United Nations Statistics Division (Tourism)
  http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/tourism.htm

- Destination Marketing Association International
  www.destinationmarketing.org

- Association of Destination Management Executives
  www.adme.org

Unit 6: Developing Destination Marketing & Positioning Strategies

At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand marketing activities of a DMO
- Create a marketing SWOT analysis
- Identify consumer behavior toward tourism and identify target markets
- Build a destination brand
- Understand the "4 Ps" of marketing: product development, price, place, and promotion
- Be able to build a marketing monitoring and evaluation plan

As mentioned previously, the DMO represents tourism industry collaboration and stewards the destination. As such, the DMO is also responsible for marketing the comprehensive range of the tourism offerings at the destination.

Marketing Activities of a DMO

Marketing is often most successful when part of a comprehensive strategy. A marketing plan helps the DMO to prioritize a destination's assets with respect to competitors, identify preferred audiences, and develop an action plan on how to reach those audiences. Many of these activities may extend previous exercises completed in the visioning and overall strategy of DMO development.

Note that marketing and sales, although closely related, are two different activities. Marketing increases customer awareness and delivers a message; sales are the direct action taken to solicit and procure customer orders. Thus, marketing includes activities such as advertising, creating brochures and collateral materials, and public relations; sales encompasses telemarketing, calls, and direct-mail solicitations.

Marketing generates understanding of audiences, necessary to mount any kind of promotion. It clarifies what are current travel trends and perceptions visitors have of the destination compared to other places, among many other kinds of data. The research component of marketing draws on many different sources. Consider the following list.

- Desk research of secondary sources
- Sales, bookings, and reservation records
- Visitor information records, e.g., guest registration cards, booking form data, call center or website data
- Government publications

- Trade association data
- Intergovernmental organizations reports (UNWTO, WTTC)
- Commercial analysis available from subscriptions
- Press clippings about competitor activities
- Qualitative or exploratory research
- Focus group discussions to identify perceptions
- Attendance at trade shows
- Observation of visitor behavior at or around a site
- Trends in the external operating environment of travelers
- Quantitative research
- Traveler behavior pattern studies
- Surveys of visitor perceptions
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Industry surveys of perceptions and challenges

TOOL 6.1: ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Company Name:
Main Contact Name:
Position:
Address:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

Where do you have offices?

How long has your company been in operation?

Are you currently a member or affiliate of any organizations?

Which type of activities does your company typically sell?

Choose One:

- Hard adventure (What %? _____)
- Soft adventure (What %? _____)

Choose all that apply:

- Mountain biking
- Hiking/trekking
- Fishing
- Rock climbing
- Kayaking/canoeing
- Whitewater rafting
- Birdwatching
- Air sports (hang gliding, paragliding, air skiing)
- Skiing/snowboarding/snowshoeing
- Adventure racing
- Horseback riding
- Hunting
- 4-Wheeling/ATV/dirt bike
- Photo safaris

What is the average package length that you offer in [REGION]?

What are the average package costs that you offer in [REGION]?

In which languages do you offer tours?

From which countries does the majority of your clientele originate that travels to [REGION]?

With what frequency do you offer packages?

- Only seasonal
- Multi-seasonal
- Year-round

How would you describe your typical hard adventure client?

- Age range:
- Country(s) of origin:
- Sex:
- Income range:
- Level of experience:

How would you describe your typical soft adventure client?

- Age range:
- Country(s) of origin:
- Sex:
- Income range:
- Level of experience:

In which [REGION] countries do you currently operate?

Do you currently offer any tours in the destination?

If no, have you previously offered trips in the destination?

If your company is no longer serving the destination, why not?

In a few words, please describe your current impressions of the destination?

On a scale of 1–5 (1 = Unfamiliar; 5 = Extremely Familiar) how would you consider your knowledge of the destination's tourism offerings?

On a scale of 1–5 (1 = Unfamiliar; 5 = Extremely Familiar), how would you consider your knowledge of *northern* the destination's tourism product (non-coastal areas)?

How would you currently describe the destination's offering as an adventure tourism destination?

Do you believe that there is a market demand for adventure tourism activities in the destination?

Where do you believe is the destination's competition in terms of adventure tourism?

Is there a gap in the destination's product offering that you believe needs to be filled?

Have you ever worked in (neighboring destination)? What are your impressions? What kind of packages do or did you sell?

How does your business identify new products to include in its offering?

What requirements does your business have regarding new packages and tours?

Does your company have specific requirements for:

- Insurance?
- Equipment provision?
- Contracting local partners?
- Accommodation quality?
- Transportation availability?
- Transfer times?
- Distance from airports?
- Terrain or climate?
- Difficulty level?
- Lead time to develop marketing materials?
- Access to technology?
- Levels of sustainability?

What is your company's contracting process for new packages and tours?

We are preparing to develop new products in the destination. Would you be interested in assisting in the process? Would you be interested in selling the resulting packages?

SWOT Analysis

Once data has been collected, researchers can then organize it to provide a better understanding of how to promote the destination. The SWOT Analysis is a frequently used planning tool that investigates a context by examining the (S)trengths, (W)eaknesses, (O)pportunities and (T)hreats.

The analysis assesses challenges and opportunities by both internal and external pressures.

Internal to the destination:

Strengths. What advantages does the destination have over others?
Weaknesses. What might account for losing tourists to the competition?

Examples of strengths: Unique assets in terms of culture, history, environment, built infrastructure, quality, operations, business environment, community support and buy-in, diversity of offers, bargain, name recognition, human resources, accessibility, government support

Examples of weaknesses: Poor transportation, gang activity, many mosquitoes during high season, conflicts among stakeholders, monument highly deteriorated

External to the destination:

Opportunities. Which upcoming trends could benefit the site?
Threats. Which upcoming trends could hurt the site?

Examples of opportunities: Developing travel trends that cater to strengths of the site, changes in demographics favorable to the destination, economic situation changing to shift visitor patterns to destination

Examples of threats: Opening of new highly competitive destinations, recession, new law imposing high visa fees on tourists, budget cut from central government

The tourism landscape constantly changes internally and externally. The SWOT analysis, if used correctly, can direct attention and reflection toward aspects of the context that may have been overlooked or underappreciated. The results can become substantial raw material for further destination marketing.

The following SWOT analysis is derived from research by the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (1997) and is a brief overview of Fiji's tourism outlook.

Table 6.1. SWOT Analysis of Fiji's Tourism Industry.

INTERNAL TO DESTINATION	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Attractive features • Broad source market • High-level of standard accommodation • Frequent domestic airline services	• Labor market imperfections • Inadequate solid waste management • High crime rate • Difficult visa requirements • Proliferation of unlicensed hotels • Foreign exchange leakages • Underdeveloped infrastructure • Unstable investment climate
EXTERNAL TO DESTINATION	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• New research into travel trends that favor destinations such as Fiji • New markets emerging around sustainable island travel • Increase destination marketing • Growth of ecotourism market	• Political instability • Uncertainty over land leases • Ongoing environmental degradation

TOOL 6.2: SWOT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

The purpose of the document is to generate input for a SWOT analysis of the destination.

1. What three features or attributes represent the greatest strengths of your destination? What does your destination have that others do not?

A.

B.

C.

2. What motivators (e.g., desire for experience, social status, quiet, contemplative location, proximity to cultural, and heritage attractions) can your destination offer?

3. What are the areas of growth for your destination? Are there target markets that may enjoy what your destination has to offer that currently do not? Are there any new trends in travel that could benefit your destination?

4. What do your competitors do better than you do? What does your destination lack that could make it truly unique and attractive? Does your destination have a poor reputation about something?

Now take your responses and enter them into the appropriate box. By looking at the matrix you can evaluate your destination's current position in the market place.

Internal Destination Strengths Responses to Question #1	Internal Destination Weaknesses Responses to Question #2
External Destination Opportunities Responses to Question #3	**External Destination Threats Responses to Question #4**

Consumer Behavior and the Art of Target Marketing

Marketing includes researching the market in order to identify segments or audiences that can be targeted with given products. Or marketing data can be used to design or modify products to fit existing markets. The market can first be segmented according to the principal reason for travel:

- Recreational and leisure travel
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Business travel
- Adventure, cultural heritage, and experiential travel

These four groups have implications in terms of length of stay, intensity of travel, accommodation preference, propensity to spend, and general choice of activities.

Markets can then be segmented by additional tourist-specific methods such as demographics, psychographics, and spending patterns or behaviors as described in Unit 3.

The methods for segmentation are often combined to create richer and nuanced visitor profiles that permit even more targeted marketing and product development. In other words, the more marketers know about the desired experience, the more they should refine their products and advertising to meet a visitor's desires, needs, and expectations. See Box 6.1 for profiles that combine a variety of qualities.

BOX 6.1

GLOBAL TOURIST DESCRIPTOR PROFILES

Backer Spielvogel Bates Advertising developed three market segments that consist of demographic, psychographic, and behavioral qualities:

	ACHIEVER	GREEN	STRIVER
SHARED VALUES	Materialism careers quest for best	eco-values conservation	work, family life realism, bitterness pressured, lonely
PRODUCT BENEFITS SOUGHT	quality of life preferred perks ego massage sensations indulgence reward self	participation with nature away from crowd new places view wildlife two-week trip	escape from boredom friendship, love physical energy coping strategies relaxation appreciation
DEMOGRAPHICS	young adults	35–54 educated fewer children	young, middle aged working mothers
MEDIA	mass, niche	niche	mass
PRICE RANGE	pay for value	pay for value	stretch budget
TARGETED BY	luxury products entertainment exotic vacations service-intensive niche industries	health foods eco-tourism eco-NGOs natural products	violent sports (men) TV soaps (women) foods for mood easy credit quick diversions
THOUGHT PATTERNS	Success confidence upward mobility	independent	fear of failure comparison glass ceiling

Solimar International (2011)

CREATING TARGET MARKETS 101

- Identify groups of people (segments) who are, or will be, in the market for an international trip.
- Establish the group's motivations for travel
- Decide whether these are the people who, if they visited, would help fulfill the destination's tourism objectives.
- Establish whether the destination has the appropriate products and services to meet their needs, desires, and expectations or has the potential to develop such products
- Persuade them to visit using appropriate, targeted messages and media.
- Evaluate and review the impact of the marketing on the segments that have been targeted.

TOOL 6.3: SWOT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Utilize this matrix to identify the overlap of available market segments and available destination offerings. List markets on the left hand side and your key tourism product offerings along the top. Then place a check in each box where they overlap. Those segments with the most checks are likely to be your target market.

	DESTINATION OFFERINGS						
MARKET SEGMENTS	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							

BRANDING AND POSITIONING

Travelers form perceptions of a destination long before they ever arrive. These perceptions derive from news stories, affiliation with products, experiences with cuisine, portrayal in movies, childhood stories, word-of-mouth, and a wide variety of individual biases. A DMO can generate visitation to a destination by creating and managing a brand that influences people's perception, ideally making it more favorable toward the destination.

The *brand* is the psychological, emotional, and motivational link between tourist and destination. A destination's brand is a collection of elements, including messages and values, designed to provoke a

positive perception in the minds of visitors. An ideal brand will position the destination among potential competitors and attract target market travelers. This can be done through:

- Identifying unique selling points that separate the destination from the competition
- Producing and prioritizing clear motivational messages for tourists that address positive characteristics of the destination
- Crafting a market positioning statement that describes the destination
- Creating a theme line or slogan and graphic logo for the destination that supports the positioning statement

Figure 6.2. Assorted Destination Logos. Logos convey some aspects of a broader brand. They also trigger positive affect toward the destination when seen by visitors who already have a positive impression of the place.

Messaging that proves successful are often supported by detailed customer understandings. These messages generate public awareness, customer interest, and ultimately the intention to visit.

A particular destination may have a hierarchy of messages targeting different market segments. These messages should be crafted for use in websites, publications, direct mail programs, trade show displays, media publicity, advertising, and sales solicitation programs. Once developed, the message and the overall brand become the face of the destination in the eyes of the consumer.

Because travelers have so many destinations from which to choose, destinations must differentiate themselves, partially through branding, in order to be seen among the crowd, let alone selected. As a result an entire sub-industry of consultants and business management firms has arisen to assist destinations and companies in this endeavor. It can be a challenging exercise to combine a diverse set of people, places, and emotions into one notion. As with all destination planning, all planning in

general, including a broad set of stakeholders provides important perspective and buy-in of the final product. Remember, to brand a place is also to brand those who live there.

The brand development process has four stages. See Table 6.1.

Table 6.1. Stages in Successful Destination Brand Management

STAGE	STEPS
Research	Establish destination's core values (durable, relevant, communicable, salient) and experience
	Study contemporary visitor preferences
	Compare current destination image with that of competitors
Identify personality and positioning	Define what the country represents (for example New Zealand represents "landscape, people, adventure and culture")
	Determine how this should be translated into a "brand personality" that interacts with the target market and generates an emotional relationship.
	Craft the brand essence represents the destination's identity and is based on the values and culture of the destination – it is communicated to and energizes those inside the organization)
	Position - create a tagline representing the brand position (communicating with outside audience – there can be multiple taglines for multiple segments if its appropriate and the destination is large enough)
Implement the brand	Use different channels to communicate the brand: advertising, interactive media, direct marketing, events, and Internet
	Market the brand through events and media
Long-term brand maintenance	Long-term marketing to retain brand personality while values are refined and modified through regular research, long-term planning and consistent positioning
	If appropriate, expand the role of the country brand to other agencies — foreign investment agencies, economic development agencies, etc.

Adapted from Allee and Kotler (2011)

TOOL 6.4: BRANDING WORKSHEET

Words that come to mind when you think of [DESTINATION]

Reasons to visit [DESTINATION]

Which colors do you associate with [DESTINATION] and why?

Colors	Reason

What are visitors looking for when they come to the [DESTINATION]?

How would you sum up [DESTINATION] in just a few words?

Marketing Objectives: the 4 Ps of Marketing

A destination usually enjoys numerous assets and experiences that can be leveraged to target various market segments. Because DMO resources are often limited, it is generally better to focus on the most receptive audiences first. Marketing objectives then should be:

- Well conceived of purpose. Levinson (2007) identifies 50 different functions of marketing.
- Precise and quantifiable, tied to particular sales goals or awareness building
- Specific it terms of target markets reached and products sold
- Within the DMO budget
- Measurable

Once objectives are identified, the DMO can create the "marketing mix" to promote the destination. The destination marketing mix is the heart of the marketing plan. The challenge facing destination marketers is to combine the best mix of marketing elements in order to obtain the best return on investment. Traditional marketing experts emphasize the Four Ps that make up the marketing mix.

Product. What experiences and services should be packaged for target markets? Product development and packaging includes product-market matching, product mixes, product life cycle, product packaging, and new product development.

Price. Which price point appeals to target markets? Can the right balance between price and volume be achieved?

Place. What distribution channels are most appropriate to distribute product to target markets? The destination place (distribution) strategy should take into account changes in the traditional travel channel, the emergence of the Internet and other new media and the role of low-cost and scheduled airlines.

Promotion. What is the best mix of promotional techniques to reach target markets?

	HOTEL	SCHEDULED AIRLINE	MUSEUM
Product			
Designed characteristics/packaging	Location, size, design	Routes, service frequency, seat size	Collection type, interpretation, design

Service component	Staff numbers, responsiveness	Customer responsiveness, uniforms	Staff numbers, uniforms
Branding	Holiday Inn, Mariott, Meridien	American Airlines, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic	Tate Gallery, Metropolitan
Image/reputation/position	Upmarket, downmarket	Reliable, exotic food, badly managed	Museum Dull, exciting, modern
Price			
Normal Price	Rack rates	First class/business/ tourist fares	Adult/senior/child rates
Promotional Price	Corporate, rates, tour operator discount rates	APEX/Bulk	Friends of the Museum rate
Promotion			
• Advertising (television/radio/ press/journals/website) • Sales promotion/ • merchandising • Public relations • Brochures • Sales Forces	Specific to each organization		

Place			
Channels of distribution including reservation systems, third party retailers and websites	• Computerizes reservation systems (CRS) • Internet • Travel Agents • Tour Operators • Airport Telephone Lines	• Global Distribution Systems (GDS) • City Offices • Airport Desks • Travel Agents	• Other Museums • Tourism Information Offices • Hotel Desks/Concierges Schools Colleges

Figure 6.3. Examples of the Marketing Mix from Middleton (2009)

DMOs package products to enhance the brand and appeal to specific target markets. Today's discerning travelers seek unique experiences, and the DMO can support destination businesses and stakeholders by assisting in product development.

DMOs should create and promote tourism unique and desirable in every season and that attracts a manageable variety of target segments. In many cases this involves packaging or developing itineraries that integrate tangible and intangible elements. Like other components of the marketing mix, product packaging should be evaluated based on research and testing. Here is a formula to do this.

EVALUATE THE SUCCESS POTENTIAL OF YOUR RESOURCES

Quality + authenticity + uniqueness + composition = Product Attractiveness

Quality. Consumer perception of the extent to which his or her expectations are met by the product.

Authenticity. The degree to which an experience reflects something true about the destination.

Uniqueness. The quality of being something desirable that other destinations are not.

Composition. The logical flow of the experience and the interconnectedness of tangible and intangible resources.

The components of the mix should be well integrated to ensure an effective marketing thrust. In addition, marketing mix options can be pursued individually or in association with others through partnerships, such as an airline service partnered with a cruise ship package. Such partnerships ideally strengthen the attraction of both products.

Common marketing tools used by DMOs, include:

Brochures. Leaflets, flyers, or other descriptive circulars; these are particularly useful for tourism and service businesses
Print media. Newspapers, magazines, and specialty publications
Broadcast media. Radio can be targeted to specific markets; cable television can likewise target specific markets; network stations can be very expensive.
Online advertising. Paying for visibility on other websites; these can be banner ads, sponsorship of other sites, purchasing key words and phrases (tags) for search engines.
Advertising specialties. Items imprinted with the organization or destination logo and given to customers (calendars, caps, desk sets, pens, and gifts)
Direct mail. Flyers, catalogues, brochures, and coupons.
Emailings. Regular or infrequent mailings to email lists; these can be direct advertisements or online newsletters.
Events. Showcasing the destination through themed parties, informational workshops, and performances of local culture
Public relations. Free feature and news articles in the media and other publicity, usually secured by public relations specialists
Informal marketing/networking. Activities such as public speaking or attending conferences and trade shows
Website. A very effective way to describe products or services in depth for customers everywhere at all hours
Social media. A way to increase word-of-mouth marketing by using online networks to share information about the destination

Major alliances could create joint-marketing alliance programs:

- Co-op ad programs
- Web site advertising
- Annual meetings
- Convention sales
- Event hosting
- Publication sales

TOOL 6.5: MARKETING PLANNING WORKSHEET

Successful marketing is a resource-intensive activity. Each initiative in the marketing plan should generate a real outcome to justify the investment. The worksheet is a template for tracking marketing and activities.

STRATEGIC MARKETING ACTION

Goal	Action Needed	Promotional Technique	Investment (financial and time)	Other Resources (human, technological, built)

STRATEGY, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Goal	Objectives	Outcome (How much by when)	Strategies

TOOL 6.6: MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET

Complete the following worksheet to determine the return on investment for a marketing initiative. The figures generated in each column should be for one activity only. For instance if you have a marketing campaign that includes an online banner advertisement and a printed advertisement, generate figures for each separately to see their effectiveness, and then total them to get a picture of the entire marketing plan's ROI.

Item	Program component Example: Printed Advertisement			Total program
1. Total Costs =	$100,000			
2. Total number of inquiries from activity =	200,000			
3. Total number of reservations =	50,000			
4. Total revenue generated =	$2,000,000			
5. Cost per Inquiry (#1/#2) =	$100,000 / 200,000 = $0.50			
6. Cost per reservation (#1/#3) =	$100,000 / 50,000 = $2.00			
7. Return on marketing investment (#4/#1) =	$2,000,000/$100,000 = $20.00			

This matrix can be altered based on the desired outcome of each initiative. Sometimes outcomes are intangible.

For instance, if you create an awareness-raising campaign and direct traffic to your website, #2 may be replaced with "visits to websites by email invitation click-through" and #3 can be "requests for more information."

Monitoring and Evaluation

Because marketing is such an important DMO activity, a monitoring and evaluation plan for marketing is invaluable. Measuring marketing performance helps the DMO to:

- assess effectiveness of tools to reach target markets
- respond quickly to changes in the market
- test assumptions about visitors perceptions and habits
- adjust strategic marketing objectives
- be more cost-effective by embracing tools that work and removing those that do not

Setting Indicators

Measuring the direct impact of marketing is complicated by the many factors that influence a traveler's decision to select a destination. Developing the monitoring and evaluation plan should be an interactive process in the marketing program. The plan contains not just marketing objectives but indicators as well based on those objectives.

Indicators should be as specific as possible to the marketing objectives already defined. Avoid indicators such as "increase in visitors" or "increased occupancy rates." While these represent final goals, indicators should be as directly related to the target market and outreach methodology.

For instance, if a marketing objective is to create destination awareness among birdwatchers, a performance indicator might be number of references to the destination on a birdwatcher blog. If a marketing objective calls for increased travel away from major urban hubs, an indicator may be the number inquiries about hotels or attractions outside of major urban hubs in target areas.

Another important indicator to measure is the return on investment of particular marketing activities, that is, the ratio of marketing expenditure to the desired outcome. For example, the marketer measures the ratio of total marketing expenditure on short-haul markets to the number of additional short-haul arrivals.

Setting Targets

Once indicators are selected, marketers must choose targets or goals for each marketing objective, if not already determined above during objective elaboration. The amount of change one desires depends on the particular activity. If for example a tour operator needs to sell 10 packages to break even, it makes little sense to set a target at less than 10. Targets can be set by month, quarter, or year(s).

SUMMARY

- Target major efforts to the major markets. Allocate resources in direct proportion to the anticipated return on investment.
- Sell strengths. Consistently focus messages on the community's top attractions, appeals, or benefits as confirmed by consumer research. If satisfied, visitors will tell other potential customers about the destination.
- Focus on attractions not found in competing destinations. These form the basis of the community's tourism personality. Use them to their full potential rather than relying on generic appeals.
- Don't be an island. Sometimes DMOs only market visitor amenities within their regional borders, but consumers do not care about boundary lines. Enhance the destination by working with nearby clusters and marketing attractions or services that will complement the product.
- Be honest. Do not exaggerate or hype customer benefits. Build the message on fact-based messaging.
- When developing objectives, ensure that they are measurable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Destination Marketing Association International
  www.destinationmarketing.org

- AbouTourism – Innovations in Destination Marketing
  http://aboutourism.wordpress.com

- Bocas Del Toro Marketing Plan
  www.gwu.edu/~iits/Sustainable_Tourism_Online_Learning/Jen/Final_Bocas_Marketing_Strategy.pdf

Unit 7: Building the Destination's Online Presence

At the end of this unit participants will be able to:

- Identify key elements for a successful web presence
- Utilize search engine optimization
- Understand the components of social media and build a social media campaign

It is no longer necessary to praise the internet for the travel and tourism industry. It has become indispensible for travelers to investigate travel options, compare prices and offers, make reservations, and share the experience with others after the completion of the journey. Consequently it has become indispensable for destination, tour operators, and other service providers. And it has become lethal for middle men such as travel agencies whose services travelers increasingly bypass as the internet allows them to communicate directly with destinations.

Thus a destination web portal should be an integral component of the marketing strategy. Destination websites generally act as the main gateway for tourism information, but can provide a number of services such as promote local attractions and activities, list local tourism businesses, suggest itineraries, and provide relevant regional history and geography. Perhaps most important, the website marks, for many travelers, the beginning of their travel experience.

In destinations with a significant number of SMEs or with poor internet connection, the website may offer the only opportunity for certain tourism businesses to market their products. Through collective accommodations listings and centralized booking systems hosted on the DMO web portal, SMEs can access a much larger market than they ever could dream of by themselves. By centralizing resources, whether convenient online lodging reservations or links to other regional and municipal websites, the portal can become an integral extension of the destination itself. In the digital age, a sense of place is no longer restricted to the physical landscape.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT	DURING THE VISIT	AFTER THE VISIT
• Build destination awareness • Reshape perceptions • Generate interest • Provide travel information • Facilitate purchases • Provide reassurance of destination's offerings • Provide pre-departure guidance	• Facilitate purchases • Recommend quality products • Provide geographical orientation • List logistical resources • Share experiences	• Share experiences • Encourage referrals • Gather feedback • Generate repeat business

Figure 7.1. Uses of a Destination Web Portal.

Key Elements for a Successful Web Presence

Depending on DMO capacity, an official website may be as simple as a single page or house an online booking system, live streams, interactive advertising, and intranet for local stakeholders. A website can be the most dependable salesperson for the destination. However, a poorly designed and managed website can damage the destination's brand.

Key website elements:

- Timely written content
- Positive images of the destination
- Easy-to-use
- Appealing to target markets
- Professional feel
- Useful information to convert interest into sales

Identifying Website Development Support

Though many advancements in website development software can make the process more accessible to those without technical website design skills, the process can still be complex, especially if the website includes more advanced interactive features. In most cases, A DMO will have to hire a website developer to design and likely maintain the website.

Even with a hired hand, understanding the basics of website development allows the DMO to more effectively guide the developer. Many talented web designers exist around the world, many of them specialize in tourism organizations. Prices vary based on location, capability, and the time the designer dedicates to building the website.
Here are some quick tips for selecting a good web designer.

Review the portfolio. Visit sites that the designer has created. Test their functionality and get a sense of their capabilities. Ask yourself, "Does this feel like a website I would want representing my DMO?"

Ask for references. Contact organizations that have websites created by the developer and ask questions about the developer's work ethic, ability to meet deadlines, skills, and ongoing support.

Ensure key skills. The ideal web developer will have a broad range of skills to help the website articulate the destination vision, generate new ideas, and implement the actual design. Ideally, the design team should include specialists in programming, search engine optimization, and graphic design. A social media expert and copywriter are helpful.

DESIGNER RESPONSIBILITIES	DMO RESPONSIBILITIES
• Creating technical aspects • Developing wireframes • Proposing visual and graphic work • Uploading and organizing content • Testing website functionality • Providing adequate training	• DMO responsibilities • Selecting the Domain • Creating written content • Identifying rich media (pictures, videos) • Communicating the destination's brand • Communicating the DMO's website needs • Providing ongoing input and feedback as requested • Testing and reviewing website

Figure 7.2. Division of Responsibilities for Creating a Website

Registering a Domain Name

The domain name is the main website address. Attempt to register among the most commonly used extensions such as .com, .org, .travel.

Choose a domain name as close to the destination's name as possible such as *nameofdestination.org*. In some cases, this is not possible because it has already been purchased by another organization. The DMO can choose to contact the owner by going to www.internic.net/whois.html and offer to purchase their name, or more common, identify a creative name similar to the place name. For instance, Madrid.com is registered to a private tour operator, but esMadrid.com — a Spanish language word that has a double meaning of "it is Madrid" and the abbreviation for Spain "ES" — is specified for official Madrid tourism organizations. Choose a domain name consistent with the brand and is memorable. It should be easy to spell and recognizable in multiple languages.

Avoid hyphens, numbers, and underscores. Domain names can be searched and purchased from a number of sites, the most popular being www.godaddy.com, www.active-domain.com, www.mydomain.com.

Hosting

A website must be hosted by someone with a computer server designed to ensure consistent, uninterrupted access for visitors to the site. Essentially the DMO rents computer space somewhere in the world to upload and maintain its site.

Hosting packages vary greatly depending on the complexity of site, the amount of storage space required, and the expected rates of traffic. The DMO should expect to pay between US$100 and US$300 a year. Web developers may have preferred companies and can provide recommendations.

Website Wish List

The DMO should identify early on which components it would like for the website. Some elements that require a great deal of content not currently available can still be built into the website and activated later. This strategy is much easier that trying to refit a website with something new once it is has already been built. It never hurts to dream big when developing websites. A few suggestions to discuss with the designer:

- An easy-to-use content management system
- Online booking capacity
- Search engine optimization and metatagging
- Google ad-words pay-per-click campaigns
- Email list or newsletter
- Google analytics to measure website traffic
- Business email server
- Social media integration with Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube with voting and sharing integrated

- Interactive maps, travel planners and itinerary creator

A number of these functions depend on the host's server-side software, so it is important to carefully select a host that can support the features desired in the website.

Visual Design

Website content includes a very strong visual component, essential for forming a useful and engaging visitor experience. As with other components, the look and feel of the website should resonate with target audiences. Professional, clean, and organized layouts reflect positively on the destination and encourage website visitors to remain on the site longer, explore more about the destination, and develop a deeper interest.

The DMO needs to provide basic guidance to the web designer about the aesthetics of the website. In many cases this centers on the brand, website goals, and explorations of colors, themes, and motifs that best reflect the destination. The designer will create a website "mock-up" or draft to review. The DMO should feel comfortable asking for edits until the designer's renderings meet the DMO's needs.

Tips for Good Website Visual Design

- Locate most important content towards the top of pages so visitors do not have to scroll down to find it.
- Keep font type and size consistent. Use bold and italics for only the most important messages.
- Use "white space" as much as possible to separate content.
- Use bullet points where possible to quickly convey messages.
- Provide a consistent navigational bar at the top.
- Utilize a "heading-summary-full content" paragraph format where possible for easy scanning.
- Include navigational hyperlinks at the end of paragraphs to other pages to evenly disperse information as much as possible.
- Make sure not to clutter the page with words or graphics.
- Use text for headers instead of images.

Website Design

Website design generally follows eight phases:

Exploration. The DMO will develop a 1–2 page brief that answers important questions about the website such as, what is the look and feel of the website? Which elements should be included? How much information is needed and who will maintain it?

Structural layout. DMO staff work with a professional designer to create the website's architecture. Specifically they sue a *wireframe* which is a simple schematic that addresses positioning of all elements, depicts navigation, and demonstrates the user experience.

Design. Once the wireframe has been approved, the designer can actually design the pages on the site, including graphics, color, font, spacing, and movement.

Content. Often simultaneous with design, sometimes prior and sometimes afterward, DMO creates, gathers, and provides written content, photographs, videos, and audio files to the designer for integration into the website.

Implementation. Content and design components are integrated into the website and uploaded, but not yet accessible to search engines.

Testing. All website functions are reviewed and user experience feedback is provided to the developer.

Launch. The draft website is migrated to its final location at the desired URL and made available to directory name servers and search engines.

Maintenance. DMO staff, with a webmaster, continues to test operations and make upgrades to both content and functionality.
While generating ideas for website design and functionality there are a number of best practices to keep in mind.

Don't provide information, sell the experience. Travelers seek more than just raw data, they want to better understand the essence of the destination. The website sells these unique aspects.

High quality information is key. The DMO should control its message by providing engaging, updated information about the destination in a creative way, making the website the best source of information for travelers, media, and other interested groups.

Utilize maps wherever possible. Tourism is location-based and travelers usually need to know where they are going. Visualizing trails, routes, itineraries and points of interest will optimize the visitor's experience on the site.

Include an events calendar. Special events such as festivals, concerts, sports matches, and seasonal wildlife viewing all provide additional reasons to visit the destination.

Take over search engines. Search engines such as those of Google, Yahoo, and Bing are internet users' gateways to information. Because a search can generate an enormous amount of data and users usually do not check findings beyond the first 10 entries, the search results displayed on the first results page is a coveted spot. Search engine optimization (SEO) can increase a page's chances of being found through search engines. See below for more information.

Be multi-lingual. Unless the destination is only interested in domestic tourism, multiple languages increase the pool of potential travelers. Languages should be prioritized according to target markets. Many sites choose to include an English translation because it is the global language.

Integrate sales. Increase the utility of the website by allowing the consumer to not only learn about the destination but book it on the spot. This does not have to be limited to hotels and tours but can include tickets to events and transactions. If applicable, the website can also sell destination-related products like books, foods, and crafts. This feature can also generate revenue for the DMO by charging commissions on sales.

Get social. Social networking will be discussed in more detail later, but building the website should include the capacity for storytelling (including photos) by visitors, residents, business owners, and anyone else interested. Websites can also capture feedback about specific destination businesses or attractions.

TOOL 7.1: CREATIVE BRIEF

Utilize the following template in order to best communicate to a designer or developer your needs for a particular website order.

Contractor (Name and Contact):
Contact (Your name and contact details):
Project (Name of your project, i.e.: Northern Montenegro Palmcards):
Deadline:

PROJECT OVERVIEW

General project description, one or two paragraphs.

- What is the project and why is it important?

Specific goals, such as selling a tour, obtaining donations for a philanthropy fund, getting new members to sign up for a Sustainable Tourism Alliance, etc.

Priorities, listed numerically

Timeline for achievement of goals

- First draft, text, sourcing images, giving feedback, final artwork, etc.

PRIMARY TARGET MARKET

A description of primary target

- Age, gender, income, level of education, family status, nationality, urban/suburban/rural, what type of media is s/he most attentive to?
- Where does s/he travel? Why? How? For how long? How much do they spend?
- Which benefits does s/he seek? What kind of experience?

Identify broader secondary target audience

- What does the target market already know about the project?
- What should be avoided when dealing with the target market?

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Details of work order

- Include wireframes if applicable, or description of the layout if not

Miscellaneous Important Points

- Important facts pulled from project overview

- List of important keywords and images and where they can be downloaded or accessed (link to project website, Flickr.com, etc.)
- Who should get photo credit and where should it be listed

Specific branding issues that must be considered (USAID, GSTA, etc.)

Note details about placement of logo, location, size and tagline if relevant.

Medium / Methodology

- What are the design outputs? For example, size, bleed, folds, or special instructions. If you are not sure, include the contact details of the printer, if available.
- How are you going to reach the target market with this material? Where will the materials appear? (placement of brochures in racks at airport, on sale at visitor centers etc.)
- Prioritize needs, taking into consideration cost of medium. For print media, consider quantity.

For the overall look and feel, take target market and medium into consideration to determine:

- Key words, such as friendly, corporate, fun, affordable, family-friendly, cutting edge, professional, luxury, meaningful, adventurous, cultural, etc.
- Specify graphics, photos, charts/tables, color, etc.
- Language
- Will you need the text to be edited and translated? Or can you provide final copy?

Deliverables

- File types that the printer requires (such as PSD or PDF) and color mode (CMYK or RGB) — again, if unsure, contact the printer
- Resolution — 300 dpi for print materials, unless for large signs or banners
- Method of delivery (CD-ROM, email, FTP, etc.)

Miscellaneous

- Foreseeable difficulties, potential problems, etc.
- Relevant resources or background information. Include reports, links to newspaper articles and websites, etc.

Budget & Project Schedule

- Complete timetable with dates of goals, individuals responsible, cost associated with goals, potential delays, etc.
- Complete list of deadlines for the process
- Total budget and payment schedule

THANK YOU!

DEVELOPING CONTENT

DMO can develop its own website content or outsource. Regardless of the origin, the content must be appropriate for the destination's target market and clearly communicate the destination's products in an engaging and honest way.

Content includes any information about the destination available to website visitors; it may come in the form of text, audio, images, video, or animation. Content augments the marketing strategy by reaching the appropriate target audience, captivating its interest, and fulfilling expectations set for the audience.

Content should be:

- Aligned with destination brand
- Subject to updating
- Timely and purposeful
- Professional in appearance
- In a variety of formats
- Interactive

The UNWTO (2007) recommends appropriate content for destination website in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Destination Website Contents

CONTENT TYPE	EXAMPLE
Inbound travel	• Rail, coach, air and sea: routes and carriers • Visa and passport requirements • Customs regulations • Currency: exchange rates, exchange locations • Local time zone
Local travel	• Air, rail, coach, bus and taxis: routes, prices, timetables • Advice on use of own car, rented car, car with driver
Local and current real-time conditions	• Price guides to bargains and commodities • Cultural advice: modes of dress, greetings, customs • Public holidays • Business operating hours • Seasonal factors • Weather • Availability of public toilets • Quality of sea water, ski slopes, surfing conditions • Traffic information

	• Handicap accessibility
Themes that reflect destination brand	• Cultural • Outdoor • Sporting • Business and conferences • Value for money
Locations and destinations	• Regions • Urban areas • Rural villages • Off the beaten path • Key natural assets: beaches, vistas, parks, ski slopes, lakes
Activities	• Destination highlights • Attractions: historical, cultural, scenic, luxury, volunteer • Suitable for children and families • Sporting activities • Hobbies and interests • Arts and culture • Wellness • Special events • Shopping and handicrafts • Culinary specialties and dining • Nightlife and entertainment • Do-it-yourself itineraries • Thematic tours (gastronomy, walking, cycling, botanical) • Paid tours, local excursions • Guiding services
Accommodations	• Hotels • Guest houses • Self-catering houses • Hostels • Camping and RV • Marinas and boating • Spas • Quality rating explanation (star system)
Additional resources	• Resources for families • Resources for educational institutions • Resources for religious groups • Resources for gay and lesbian travelers

	• Voluntourism opportunities • Sustainable tourism credentials • Media section

Content Management Systems

Websites that contain significant amounts of information are generally built on top of content management systems (CMS) that facilitate the organization and manipulation of data. DMOs can use CMSs to manage information beyond just websites to include tourism businesses, gathering consumer feedback information, and creating dataflow within the organization through "members only" sections and community discussion areas.

The choice of CMS rarely affects the website's visitor experience. The CMS has important ramifications, however, for the website's back end (Figure 7.3b) that controls what appears on the public front end (Figure 7.3a).

Figure 7.3a. Website/CMS Front End (public view).

Figure 7.3b. Website/CMS Back End (designer view).

The DMO and designer should decide which CMS works best based on the level of interaction that the DMO needs and the type of content that will most frequently appear on the site. Some CMS such as Wordpress provide a simple interface but do not facilitate more advanced components. Other CMS such as Joomla! have an ever-growing library of open-source, low-cost functions but may be more difficult to manage for a DMO team with limited technical capacity. The CMS needs to be installed and configured on the server that hosts the website. Other CMS include CMS Made Simple, Drupal, DotNetNuke, and PHP-Fusion.

Search Engine Optimization

Since each search engine search can literally return findings that number in the millions, website designers have created a set of techniques called SEO which is the design and manipulation of website content in order that search engines rank pages at the top of search results and not lost in thousands of millions of results never consulted. When a user searches for a particular word or phrase, the search engine returns all resulting pages ranked by relevancy according to a specific algorithm based on keywords, number of visits, number of links to the page, and other variables.

Search engine users rarely look at results past the first page making the first handful of results extremely valuable for driving traffic. To optimize a page for search engines, writers integrate relevant keywords throughout the page (especially in the metadata fields of a page) to ensure that search engines find the page and assign it a high rank. Optimizers also create links to keywords to other sites which increases the routes by which search engines can find the page and increase its priority. Today many companies higher writers experienced in SEO to write copy for their websites or to write materials that appears on others' websites that have links to their websites. Some important facts about SEO:

- The setup process is slow and it may take up to three months for search engine to register changes.
- Ensure that the website's CMS is search engine friendly
- If your web developer is leading the SEO process, ensure that he has previously worked with DMOs and tourism destinations.
- Ask for case studies and statistical results of his or her work

- Ask for a clear list of SEO services provided (keyword research, the number of optimized keywords per page, metadata)
- Ask how they will measure their SEO activities

KEYWORDS

Keywords link website visitors and search engines. Keywords are the most important elements in online marketing success. When a potential visitor types in keywords to find a destination or service provider, the search engine could mean life for those whom it places on the first page of results or death for those who fall far behind.

The first step in optimizing the destination's website is to develop a list of 100 to 150 keywords that will be used throughout the site. Select words that capture the destination's offering and are of interest to the target market, and words that are less frequently used by competitors, but likely to be used by customers. The web developer will incorporate the chosen keywords throughout the destination's site.

DMOs can enhance their keywords by conducting ongoing research of relevant keywords. The best tool for analysis is Google AdWords at https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal.

TOOL 7.2: KEYWORDS RESEARCH LIST

Use this template to identify keywords and track their relevance to your destination. Some examples have been included.

GROUP	KEYWORDS	RELEVANCE TO WEB CONTENT
1	Accommodation Patong Beach	Low
1	Thailand Patong Beach	Med
1	Places to visit in Patong	High
2	Best place to stay in Phuket	Med
2	Best places to stay in Phuket	Med
2	Best places to stay in Thailand	High
3	Best resort Phuket	High
3	Phuket hotel resorts	Low
3	Phuket resorts	Low
4	Boutique hotel Phuket	High
4	Luxury hotel Phuket	High
4	Phuket luxury hotel	High

META DESCRIPTIONS

Meta descriptions help define what is contained within each page. Though this does not help the ranking, it does help the search engine user identify which site to use. Each metatag should be under 200 total characters.

Figure 7.4. Metatag Description in Web Search Page.

ALT TAGS

Because search engines cannot decipher images or movies, Alt Tags are keywords coded alongside these media in order to increase search engine findings by providing additional reference to the site's content. The web developer can assist with this process.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN TOURISM

Social media are rapidly changing and growing. When well-managed, they are useful, low-cost mechanisms for the destination to distribute important messages to targeted audiences as well as engage and raise awareness of the destination among larger audiences. However, a lack of strategic thinking about social media can drain resources discourage ongoing participation with future members and audiences.

Figure 7.4. Social Media Landscape 2011. January 2011.
(www.fredcavazza.net/2010/12/14/social-media-landscape-2011)

But one thing is clear: social media is no longer optional. Networking and information sharing about the destination happens regardless of a DMO's wishes. To survive and compete in the virtual world demands that the DMO stay engaged and craft its messages for internet dissemination.

Social media can no longer be seen as a separate marketing initiative, but must be fully integrated into a larger communications strategy. "Social media experts" have become irrelevant. Each stakeholder in the DMO should understand how the organization has chosen to use its social media networks and participate in the ongoing data feed. Messaging and tone must be consistent. Each entry must add value to the ongoing discourse. Social media should be understood in terms of contextual marketing: providing what the consumer wants and making it useful and accessible so that action can be taken when it matters most to the consumer.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

The following section presents a general overview of the most popular methodologies and tools of social media. This is not meant to be comprehensive, but a baseline for selecting online distribution channels.

Blogs. The most common means of social media, these spaces consist of a website with dated content in reverse order, usually known as "posts." "Bloggers" are authors who usually encourage feedback and comments with each entry. Frequent readers may utilize RSS Feeds (Really Simple Syndication) that aggregate post from multiple sources in one place.	
Mircoblogging. Reverse chronological posts with a character limit, microblogs are short messages that generally provide links to longer information, incite conversations, or share up-to-the minute information about an event. The most popular microblogs are Twitter and Tumblr.	
Social networks. Online platform composed of individual pages ("profile") created and managed by single users or organizations, built to share content, blogs, images, videos, and lists of friends. Also includes the capability of tagging and messaging. Facebook is the world's leading social network, with other specialized sites based on geography (Orkut is widely used in Brazil) and content (LinkedIn focuses mainly on professional services).	
Social bookmarking. A methodology that allows individuals to identify, flag, and code with keywords online content that they find interesting or useful. Much like the bookmarks held within a browser, the social bookmarks are housed at an online library. Individuals can share their collected content	

and tags with other users to develop a continually streaming set of data. Delicious.com, Digg, StumbleUpon and Reddit are the dominant social bookmarking sites.	
Media sharing. Sites that allow users to upload and share media, such as photos and videos. Content is generally tagged and searchable. On many sites, individuals or organizations create "channels" that feature only their content. Users subscribe to various channels to get an ongoing feed of media. Popular sites include YouTube that features video content and Flickr that features still images.	
Wikis. Websites that use collaboration from a network of users to generate content on a particular subject. Content can be edited by users that receive a particular level of permission from site administrators. The most famous wiki site is Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia with millions of entries written by thousands of people around the world. WikiTravel is also for users gathering information on destinations.	

DESTINATION BLOG

The DMO's blog can serve as a destination's central story teller, sharing developments that resonate with target markets and fomenting interaction between potential travelers, residents, and tourism businesses.

Blogs are ubiquitous across the internet, used by large companies (Bill Marriott's "Marriott on the Move"), media outlets (National Geographic's "Intelligent Traveler"), private individuals (HaroldGoodwin.info), as well as destinations (latest.yoursingapre.com). Content can be newsworthy, issue-based, opinionated, a mixture of all, or simply filled with miscellanea. However, successful blogs provide key information to a key target audience and encourage continued interest.

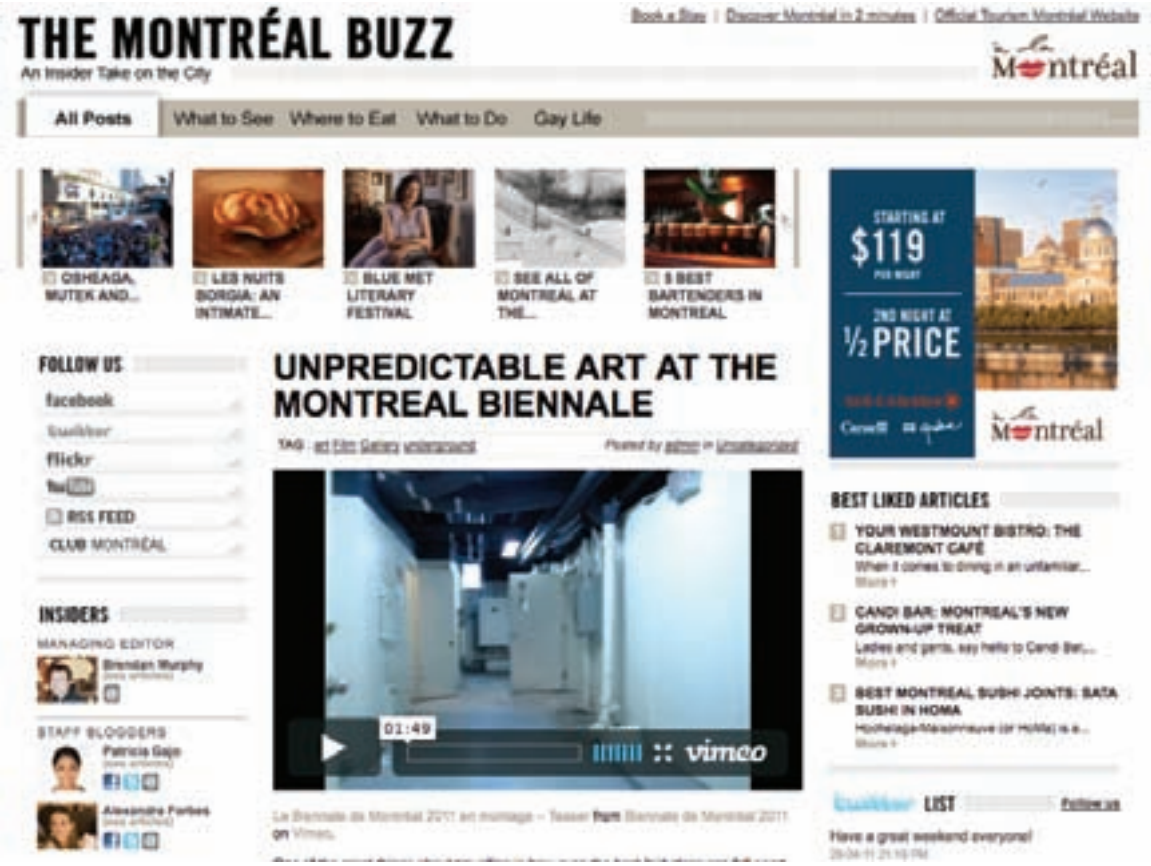


Figure 7.6. The Montreal Buzz, a Blog (http://www.tourisme-montreal.org/blog/)

The blog should have a single editor responsible for overseeing materials and ensuring that the tone and language is consistent with the DMO's brand and messaging.

Readers may respond to postings. Organizations once viewed free and open dialogue as a threat to their organizational image, research has demonstrated that it actually allows for deeper engagement by target audiences and builds trust in the brand.

Sharing responsibilities for content among a network of DMO staff and members can alleviate much of the pressure to produce regular material. A regular schedule of features can help, for instance every other Friday the blog features a new product offering and every other Monday it features a key destination innovator. These plans can be modified if they do not gain readership.

Social Media Content

The destination's social media activity is only as strong as its content. As the destination attempts to gain recognition as an interesting, high-quality location for the target market, it must provide

excellent content to interest participants. The content must be fresh, new, interesting, and add value to the cloud of information that already floats over the Internet.

In the short-term, the DMO should provide stories about activities at the destination, as well as review trends, perspectives, opinions, and tools that can position the destination in a new light and generate additional interest. In the long-term goal, the DMO could become an original content provider fills a gap in the information being offered about the destination and in a way that casts that destination in a warm light.

Content sources may include:

- Interviews with business leaders, politicians, specialists, or residents at the destination
- Interesting articles or good press about the destination from other outlets
- Descriptions of events in the area
- Quizzes about the destination
- New product offerings
- Special rates or coupons
- New statistics
- New tours being offered
- New construction or investment

Tone and Voice

An important component of the destination's social media brand identity is the message tone. Social media thrive on conversation. Where press releases may be more formal, following a precedent on layout and content, blog posts or Facebook updates leave more room for creativity. Chris Koch, a contributor to SocialMediaToday.com (2010) offers the following qualities for creating a good social media voice.

(More) Informal. Social media should be more conversational. Use writing that sounds more like speech. "If it sounds too stuffy, overly long, or overwrought, simplify it."

Grammatical. Though more informal by default, the lack of proper grammar, spelling, and vocabulary reflects poorly on the organization.

Communal. A destination can have a variety of target audiences. It should have a voice that is reasonable to each of them.

Dialectical. Use technical jargon only where reasonable (and as little as reasonably possible).

Authentic. Be honest about organizational inner workings and plans. Obfuscation earns little merit.

A decision on tone and voice should be made early by the destination's communications team and should be consistent across all social media.

Managing Comments

The collaborative and communicative nature of social media allows like never before the DMO to reach out to destination stakeholders and potential travelers. Comments on blog posts, YouTube feeds, and Facebook walls provide up-to-the-minute feedback on destination perceptions. Because social media are open forums, DMOs must also be prepared to handle negative and critical comments. There are many types of negative commentary, ranging from outright disdain for the destination or DMO to constructive criticism about a particular activity. In some cases comments may shine a light on a real problem and whose resolution can strengthen message and destination. Even if the comments are undeserved, acknowledging the concern with a positive, courteous, factual response bolsters the DMO's image of integrity and transparency.

Measures of Success

The social media toolkit continually develops and evolves. The DMO must regularly monitor effectiveness of particular activities as its audiences and messages change. Social media results can be difficult to measure but various platforms are beginning to offer ways to monitor readership and viewership free of charge. Facebook offers detailed metrics on page use and websites such as klout.com offer ways to measure penetration of ideas via social media.

For those DMOs with additional resources, there are sophisticated tools and platforms that help monitor social media conversations by the minute, including keyword searches about competitors. These tools can be costly, but if social media are tools to reach the DMO's target market, there may be value.

Summary

- Successful destination websites provide as complete an experience as possible, enticing travelers with interesting stories, providing logistical information, and including the capacity to make bookings.
- Website design and development is a long process best aided by a highly skilled professional.
- Online marketing and social media must fully integrate into a destination's marketing plan.
- Thorough planning for the generation of high-quality, relevant content development is essential.
- Online strategies should frequently be measured to determine the return on investment

For More Information

- www.radian6.com
- www.collectiveintellect.com
- www.lithium.com
- www.sysomos.com
- www.socialmedia.alterian.com

Ongoing Webinars for marketing tourism

- Hubspot
  www.hubspot.com

- Tourism Currents
  www.tourismcurrents.com

Unit 8: Developing a Visitor Information Program

At the end of this unit participants will be able to:

- Identify tourist informational needs
- Generate a tourism information strategy
- Implement additional sources of revenue

Travelers are often inundated with information and options when they arrive at a new destination. The DMO can promote a positive traveler experience by maintaining a visitor information program that provides reliable resources about the destination.

Tourist Informational Needs

Ideally, a visitor information program enhances visitor enjoyment, entices them to stay longer and spend more money by providing more information about the destination's offerings. Moreover, collaboration with the business community, public sector, and attractions necessary to establish and operate a visitor information programs serves to strengthen the DMO's value to the local community.

WHAT VISITORS NEED	WHAT VISITORS WANT
• Maps and Directions • Practical Information: • Public toilets • Public and private transport information • Baby changing facilities • Handicapped accessible facilities/attractions • Locations of ATMs/banks/currency exchange	• A knowledgeable, trusted guide • Inspiration • Discovery • Authentic experiences

Figure 8.1. Visitor Needs and Wants.

TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

Tourism professionals also contribute to the tourism information process, both as providers of information and as recipients of knowledge. These are the secondary recipients of information, as well as a primary distribution channel. They include:

- Hotel concierges and staff
- Tour operators
- Tour guides
- Travel agents
- On and off-line publishers of tourism information
- Tourist boards and CVBs
- Visitor information staff (see kiosks in Recommended Distribution Methods)

WHAT TOURISM PROFESSIONALS NEED	WHAT TOURISM PROFESSIONALS WANT
• Quality information about local and countrywide visitor services • Updated information of events and activities • Ability to speak with authority and confidence	• Ability to quickly meet customers' needs • Ability to give customers complete satisfaction by matching their expectations with a real experience • To be seen as a knowledgeable, trusted guide • To win customer

Figure 8.2. Tourism Professional Needs and Wants.

TOURIST INFORMATION STRATEGY

Key questions when developing a tourist information strategy:

- Where do travelers currently get their information?
- Where are there missed opportunities to provide better information?
- What types of information currently exist?
- What types of information are missing?
- How is information being consumed? What is most relevant and effective?
- How much detail and support is needed?

Figure 8.3 illustrates significant information points of contact within an overall tourism information system.

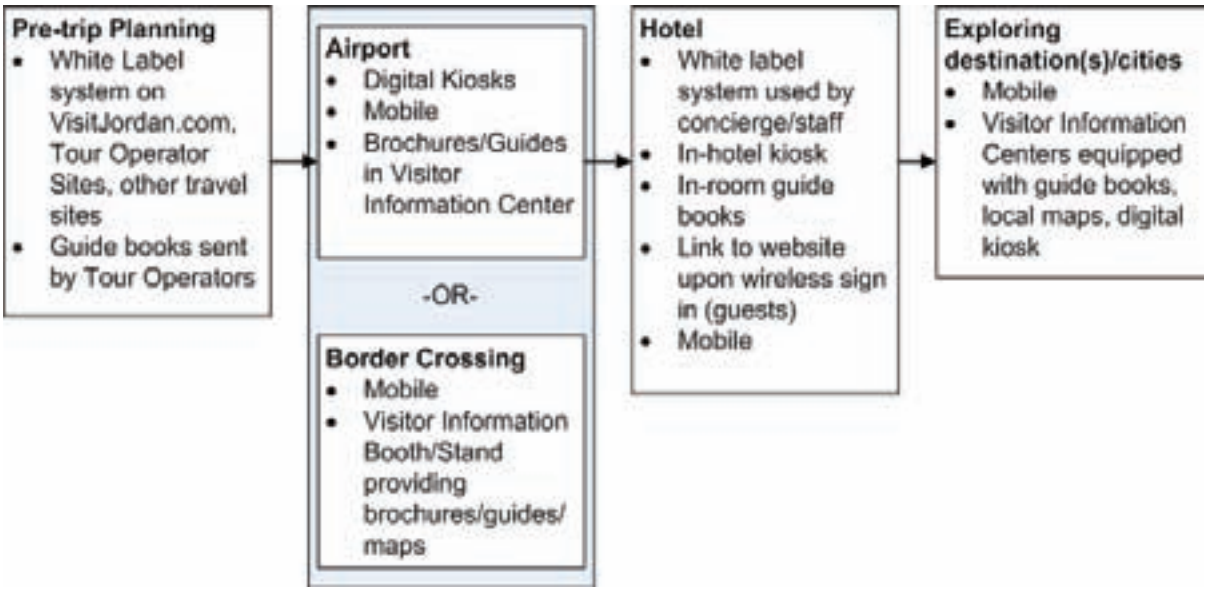


Figure 8.3. Elements of a Tourist Information System

Visitor Information Center

Visitor information centers (VIC) play a front-line role in the visitor-destination interface. VIC facilities range from commercial buildings, heritage buildings, chambers of commerce, city council offices, purpose-built buildings, or as an annex to museums or other attractions. In smaller destinations, the VIC is a service offered in conjunction with other businesses.

Because VICs are often staffed, they can provide more than static destination information. They can offer personalized interpretation for respective communities by exploring history, industry, arts, and crafts. Some VICs even incorporate community meeting spaces such as picnic areas, meeting rooms, and playgrounds.

A VIC supports the perception that the destination is visitor-friendly and encourages community ownership of tourism. All visitor centers should provide tourist information that is current, accurate, trustworthy, and delivered in a high quality manner. At a minimum, any visitor center should offer digital kiosks, a master guide to the destination, and a local city guide in which the center can be found.

The international tourist expects to find someone at an information center who is knowledgeable, polite, respectful, fluent in the tourist's language or English, and eager to help. Whilst these centers

can be stuffed with a wealth of information, nothing substitutes a warm, friendly human face to welcome visitors to a destination.

TOOL 8.1: VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER CHECKLIST

OVERALL

- Does the area have sufficient attractions and facilities to support a VIC?
- Is the area currently attracting or have potential to attract visitation?
- Are there new tourism products/initiatives being developed in the region that will attract more visitors?
- Can any of the exiting government or business entities in the region adequately serve visitors to the community?

LOCATION

- Can a VIC be established at a location that will attract a large percentage of visitor traffic?
- What are location/site options?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of each site?
- Is the site easily accessible?
- Is sufficient parking available?
- What types of premises are required?
- Do they already exist?
- Do they need to be purpose built?
- If existing premises are available:
  - Will there be sufficient floor area to operate the center effectively?
  - Will the internal layout impose any constraints on operations?
- If facilities for disabled travelers are not available, can these facilities be made?
- If the VIC is established in shared premises:
  - Will the VIC be compatible with other activities on site?
  - Can the VIC be clearly separated?
- For construction of a VIC:
  - What are the physical constraints?
  - Are services available: power/water/sewer/phone?
  - What are the rental/leasing fees?

FUNDING/STAFFING

- How will funding be obtained for:
  - Establishment?
  - Ongoing Operations?
- How will the VIC be staffed?
  - Paid staff?
  - Volunteers?
  - Shared Staffing?
- How many staff people are needed?
- Is there ample staff in the community?
- What recruitment procedures are necessary?
- What management procedures are necessary?

OPERATIONS

- What will be policy for accepting collateral into the VIC?
- Only for members of DMO?
- Only for tourism businesses?
- Free of charge for any business?
- Monthly charge for businesses outside tourism?
- Is the VIC intended to provide an after-hours information facility?
- If so, how will this be provided?
- Will the TIC operate a commissionable booking service?
- What financial management booking service will be required?
- What are the other revenue generating opportunities?
- What staff and volunteer training programs are necessary?
- Have budgets been prepared?
- Is a business plan in place?
- Is the establishment of a VIC feasible?

INFORMATION KIOSKS

Touch screen kiosks are a simple and effective way of allowing visitors to navigate large quantities of information. Strategic and safe locations for kiosks include hotels airports, and at visitor information centers. Ideally staff could assist anyone with questions or difficulties. In many cases, the system provides the same information that is available online and via mobile. The kiosks should also have a telephone with a direct toll-free connection to tourism businesses or services operated by the DMO.

An example of such a kiosk can be found in London (by London Marketing), is shown below.

Figure 8.4. Telephone Visitor Information Kiosk in London.

Mobile Devices

Mobile devices represent a fast growing mechanism of information distribution. Any instructions on the system published on- and off-line must make it clear to visitors that they should check pricing with their home network prior to using the service.

Since local usage is usually free, local tour guides, hotel staff, and other members of the tourism industry who regularly interface with visitors could make regular use of the technology. A local tour guide has immediate access to highly detailed information that he can share with his travelers.

Figure 8.5. Mobile Device App Displaying Destination Information. Photo: Apple iTunes Store

With such a system, any guide, no matter how new, can access extensive information about his or her area. This will help them meet visitor expectations ("a nice Italian restaurant nearby that isn't too expensive").

Technology is improving quickly. Tourism-related apps for smartphones are available in online marketplaces such as the Apple Store (www.apple.com/webapps/travel/) and the Android Market (http://market.android.com). Features such as augmented reality allow a user to use the device's camera to view geolocated information, by pointing your camera at an item and then receiving information layered over it through the on-screen display. Numerous venues have installed interpretive stops that trigger GPS-enabled personal devices to play interpretive a/v recordings when the tourist reaches specified GPS coordinates, such as a viewpoint in front of a monument. Additionally, social networks continually integrate themselves with handheld devices such that customers can review places and leaves tips in real time during their visit.

Revenue Generators

VICs can incorporate revenue generators into their operation.

- Booking commissions
- Sale of maps, posters, guidebooks, and other publications
- Sale of local art and handicrafts
- Sale of visitor survey data
- Local tour guiding services
- Café and other foods
- Photocopying, fax, email, and internet access
- Sale of Guidebooks, brochures (hotels, dining, sightseeing)
- Currency Exchange

Summary

- Access to information is a key contributor to visitor satisfaction.
- The DMO can facilitate information flow from destination products and service providers to visitors.
- The tourism industry relies on DMO information services as another branch of marketing.
- Visitor information centers are locations where travelers can acquire information about the destination, but may also purchase other goods and services
- Information kiosks are an increasingly popular method to provide information to visitors.
- Mobile app devices provide timely and detailed information to visitors on the move.
- Information services can also offer a variety of income-generating services.

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Glossary

Accommodation. Any kind of housing where someone stays a night or more

Assessment Team. A group of professionals with complementary expertise which analyzes something

Assets. A useful or valuable thing, person, or quality

Attraction. Any object, person, place, or concept that draws people either geographically or through remote electronic means so that they might have an experience. The experience can be recreational, spiritual, or otherwise.

Audit. Inspection or examination of a building or other facility to evaluate or improve its appropriateness, safety, efficiency, or the like

Authentic. Made or done the same way as an original, genuine

Cluster. A group of people or organizations, especially businesses, working closely together toward similar ends

Community-based Tourism. A form of tourism in which a significant number of local people have substantial control over and involvement in its tourism development and management

Cultural Attraction. An attraction of cultural origin as a manifestation of that culture without the original intention of serving tourism. May be tangible (building, landscape, object) or intangible (dance, song, art style).

Destination. Any place at any scale defined by the market as a unique location capable of attracting visitation. A site is a location of a unique feature; many sites may be within a single destination.

Destination Stewardship. Conducting, supervising and managing a destination

Experience. The entirety of the process consisting of the following formula (where the arrow means "causes"): (Activity + Situation + Resource) → Event → Reaction → Memory = Experience.

Facilitator. Someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them in some decision-change process, whether planning, conflict resolution, or implementation

Gateway Community. A geographically proximate community to an attraction that supplies numerous services to visitors

Global Positioning System. A radio navigation system that allows land, sea, and airborne users to determine their exact location on the planet

Green Technologies. Technologies with the intention of minimizing environmental impact or improving environmental conditions

Inbound. People who are coming into a country or a tour operator who brings visitors into a country

Limits of Acceptable Change. An approach to managing environmental and social conditions based on experimentation, learning, and application of subjective values as opposed to carrying capacity

Marketing. The total of activities involved in the transfer of goods from the producer or seller to the consumer or buyer, including advertising, shipping, storing, and selling.

Market Segmentation. The process of categorizing people into different groups

that share similar characteristics for the purpose of more precisely targeting them with products and services.

Natural Attraction. An attraction of natural origin

Private Sector. The part of the national economy that is not under government control

Psychographics. Characteristics of a popular that refer to psychological aspects such as attitudes, values, benefits sought, beliefs

Public Sector. The part of the national economy that is controlled by the government

Qualitative Measure. Performance measures that are descriptions of situations or conditions which cannot be recorded numerically

Quantitative Measure. Performance measures that can be recorded numerically

Rack Rate. The price a hotel charges for a room before any discount has been taken into account. The published rate for a room, sometimes set artificially high and used to calculate a variety of discounts.

Stakeholder. A person, group, or organization that has an interest or stake in some process or endeavor

Survey. A tool used to gather a sample of data or opinions considered to be representative of a whole group

Sustainable. Capable of being continued with minimal long-term effect on the environment or society

Target Market. A group of people at which a business or destination aims its marketing

Tour Operator. A person or business who combines various components to create a product that offers travel experience opportunities

Traveler Philanthropy. A traveler's act of making a contribution to a cause interpreted by a tourist experience, whether monetary or in kind

Triple Bottom Line. Returns on investment that are economical, social, and environmental.

Visitor Profile (Market Segment). Combination of demographic, psychographic, and spending behaviors that characterize a particular group of consumers

Wireframe. A mock-up of a website indicating the proposed contents, connections, and styles before an actual rendering occurs.

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